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SIGNS, LANGUAGE, AND KNOWLEDGE IN
ST. AUGUSTINE'S *DE MAGISTRO*.

Charles Connaghan

University College London

Ph.D. in Classics

August 2004



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Abstract

The *de magistro* is the primary work of Augustine which focuses on his philosophy of language. The dialogue, however, is concerned centrally with the question of the acquisition of knowledge and it is through an analysis of this question that Augustine arrives at his conclusions about language.

Plato's presentation of the Paradox of Enquiry, in the *Meno*, pervades the *de magistro* and is at the basis of this thesis on Augustine's text.

The overall approach, in this study, to the issues in the *de magistro* is focused upon elucidating four main interrelated themes which Augustine employs in his approach to the Paradox. These themes are (1) the Stoic 'commemorative' sign and the subsequent questions concerning the nature of linguistic signs as evidence and as a basis for knowledge; (2) the idea of ostensive definition as a means of exposing the limits of language and of demonstrating possible ways around these limits; (3) the semiotic nature of language with the related analysis of a theory of meaning, and signification, so as to attempt an understanding of the relation of language to reality; and (4) the Platonic theory of Recollection and Augustine's use of it as a means of positing a possible solution to the Paradox.

The methodological approach will involve a consideration of the primary influences on Augustine's analysis of language; a contextualising of the ideas presented in the *de magistro* by means of other relevant works by Augustine; and a consideration of subsequent philosophical and semiotic theories when these can serve to clarify the ideas posited by Augustine.

The main focus of the above approach is to clarify Augustine's picture of knowledge acquisition and the philosophy of language which developed together with his

epistemological concerns. Although Augustine is shown to develop a sophisticated approach both to knowledge acquisition and to the related theme of language acquisition, both approaches are argued to ultimately founder upon the Paradox as presented in Plato and as applied to language acquisition in the modern critique employed, with particular reference to Augustine, by Wittgenstein.

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To Sonny

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Abbreviations

<i>ABG</i>	<i>Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte: Bausteine zu einem historischen Wörterbuch der Philosophie</i>
<i>AL</i>	<i>Augustinus-Lexikon</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Oeuvres de Saint Augustin</i>
<i>CAG</i>	<i>Corpus Augustinianum Gissense</i> , ed. C. Mayer (2 nd ed., 2004)
<i>CCL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>DD</i>	<i>De dialectica</i>
<i>DDC</i>	<i>De doctrina christiana</i>
<i>DK</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , edd. H. Diels & W. Kranz (10 th ed., 1960)
<i>DM</i>	<i>De magistro</i>
<i>JbAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>HP</i>	<i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i> , edd. A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley (1987)
<i>LSJ</i>	<i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> , edd. H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones (9 th ed., 1996)
<i>L-S</i>	<i>Latin Dictionary</i> , edd. C.T. Lewis & C. Short (Revised edition, 1979)
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , ed. P.G.W. Glare (1968-1982)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>

<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von G. Wissowa.
<i>REAug</i>	<i>Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes</i>
<i>RechAug</i>	<i>Recherches Augustiniennes</i>
<i>SVF</i>	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> , ed. H. von Arnim (1903-1905)
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>
<i>TU</i>	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen</i>

1. Introduction.

0001 Augustine is concerned in the *de magistro*¹ primarily with epistemology and with the question of the acquisition of knowledge. The approach adopted is, however, largely concerned with language and to this extent involves a great deal of analysis of language generally and of its semantics and semiotics specifically. The reason for this approach is, simply put, that knowledge acquisition implies learning, learning implies teaching, and teaching involves either the telling or the showing of something to someone. The most obvious form of teaching, for Augustine, would appear to involve telling something to someone. Therefore, a sensible approach to the consideration of knowledge acquisition would begin with a consideration of language and the ability of language to transfer information from one person to another. As will be argued, the picture given by Augustine is such that the world is objectively fixed and, therefore, determines any language which we might use to describe it. The concepts, and the meanings of words which are correlates of these concepts, are determined by the world. The implications of such a position are not trivial and Augustine will be shown to attempt to make sense of the correlation between word meanings and concepts, and to bridge the gap between these meanings and concepts and the world from which they derive. Central to this will be the attempt to establish an explanation whereby there is a coherent picture both of our relationship with the objective world and of whether there is a verifiable way of talking about this world.

0002 The following thesis will consider Augustine's analysis of language as a means of engaging with the problem of knowledge acquisition. Augustine's approach involves a systematic and tightly integrated discussion of an interrelated series of

¹ Henceforth referred to as DM.

problems which are introduced through an analysis which constantly shifts from comparing to contrasting the pedagogic modes of telling and showing. Indeed, passages of discussion which have often been interpreted as digressions, as would befit the loose form of an historical discussion, are seen to be integral to the position Augustine is positing when considered both in relation to the strictly linear development of the dialogue and in relation to the argument as a whole. It has therefore seemed sensible, in this thesis, to follow Augustine's line of reasoning in a linear fashion, only digressing so as to elucidate latent implications which must be understood so as to fully grasp Augustine's intention at any specific point in the dialogue. This methodological approach is intended to avoid two main obstacles: superficiality and repetition. On account of the complex interrelatedness of the themes under discussion in the DM, a treatment of topics individually would necessarily lead to a simplification of the argument of the dialogue as a whole or, if this were to be avoided, would lead to a great deal of repetition of the central themes which recur throughout the dialogue under various guises. Although this thesis makes no claim to do justice to the full complexity and integrated nature of the DM it is hoped that the linear approach adopted will go some way towards achieving the intention of this study: namely, to present a coherent analysis of the central argument as presented in the dialogue. The analysis of the argument of the DM as a whole will involve two main themes, primarily a consideration of Augustine's theory of knowledge acquisition, and secondarily, the related concern with a theory of language which presents itself in the light of the main epistemological considerations of the dialogue. A brief description of the thesis as it develops chapter by chapter will now follow.

0003 In Chapter 2 the proposal that speech is teaching is discussed together with the implications of this for Augustine's preliminary definition of speech and the attempt

to characterise a relationship between language, the mind, and reality. The view that speech is teaching *qua* reminding is presented as raising two possible analyses: either reminding in the sense of the Stoic ‘commemorative’ sign, or in the sense of Platonic ‘recollection’.

0004 Arising from the introduction of possible definitions for speech is the discussion in Chapter 3 of Augustine’s semiotic analysis of language. This makes evident the implicit presence in the DM of Plato’s Paradox of Enquiry (v. *inf.* § 2) as presented in the *Meno*. One sign leads to another, one interpretation to another, in a regress which appears to negate the possibility of establishing the item which any term signifies. This regress is discussed with a view to the problem of clarifying the relation of language to reality and of understanding the role of the human intellect in this relationship. In this chapter there is also a consideration of the role of signs as evidence in Augustine so as to contextualise the commemorative nature of linguistic signs, as so presented in the DM.

0005 The problematic relation between language and reality is refocused in Chapter 4 with an introductory consideration of the showing mode of teaching. Augustine’s use of ostensive definition is discussed in this regard. The attempt to break the semiotic regress, by means of ostension, is seen to arrive at a preliminary conclusion where items may be directly ostended through performance.

0006 The conclusions reached concerning ostension prompt a consideration of the three classes of communication, beginning with that of signs shown by signs in Chapter 5. The consideration of this class of communication focuses upon Augustine’s approach to meaning and signification, and his philosophic sources for this approach. Augustine’s analysis highlights the mental intermediary in

communicative acts and in this way introduces the problem of speaker's intention and ambiguity.

0007 The second class of communication, where things are shown by signs, is discussed in Chapter 6. This establishes the importance of the problem of ambiguity in the communicative process. The complexities of the relation between a linguistic term, the related mental event, and the item which is signified are discussed in relation to ambiguity and the necessity of contextualisation for disambiguation is introduced.

0008 With the previous two classes of communication having been discussed and the problems which they raise having been clarified, the third class whereby things are shown through performance is introduced with a reconsideration of ostension in Chapter 7. The final theory of ostension, as shown by the Birdcatcher example, demonstrates that all knowledge must, according to Augustine, come from a form of direct experience. However, the problematic role of interpretation in the process is seen to remain. Augustine is shown to have clarified and refined his approach to knowledge acquisition, and the role of language in this, but not to have arrived at a satisfactory conclusion.

0009 The Paradox of Enquiry is finally considered directly in Chapter 8, with the proposal that nothing is learned through signs. Objects (and words *qua* objects) are learned directly and although there is a sense of the Stoic 'commemorative' sign at play in Augustine's presentation of language, this is not the model employed in the DM such that teaching is reminding. Language acquisition and the difficulties it raises for knowledge acquisition are here considered.

0010 Knowledge itself, as discussed in Chapter 9, is taken to be understanding and can only be fully grasped by means of the Inner Christ and through direct contact with the object of knowledge. In such a way, it is argued, Augustine attempts to negate the

Paradox of Enquiry and to dispose of the lingering problems of ambiguity and need for interpretation on the part of humans. The role of the Inner Christ is argued to be Augustine's final attempt to extricate himself from the problems encountered due to the model of Platonism which he holds and due to the implications this brings both to language acquisition, knowledge acquisition, and the role of verifiability with respects to both of these.

0011 In Chapter 10 the issue concerning language and speaker's intention is briefly reconsidered in the light of the idea of knowledge through immediacy and the problem inherent in communication from one mind to another is related to this.

While, finally, in Chapter 11 the usefulness of speech is discussed together with its relation to the acquisition of knowledge.

0012 In the final analysis Augustine is held, in this thesis, to have demonstrated a thorough grasp of the difficulties which are central to the question as to how one can both understand the world and speak about it. This said, the attempts made to resolve these difficulties are argued to ultimately founder due to a failure on Augustine's part to achieve a theory of knowledge, and language acquisition, which is both compatible with his world picture and which resolves, satisfactorily, the paradoxical implications of the relation of such a theory to such a world picture.

2. The Purpose of Speech.

0013 Knowledge and, specifically, how it is acquired is a central theme in the DM. The dialogue, written in 389, in many ways forms a companion piece with the earlier *contra Academicos*² (386). In the *contra Academicos* Augustine challenges the sceptical positions professed by the academic followers of Plato³ and defends the thesis that knowledge is possible; while in the DM he considers how such knowledge is acquired and in so doing confronts the Paradox of Enquiry, familiar from Plato's *Meno* (80d-e)⁴. The Paradox of Enquiry basically proposes that one cannot discover either what one knows (if one knows it, there is no need for enquiry) or what one does not know (as one does not know what one is looking for)⁵. The conclusion reached by Augustine in the *contra Academicos*, that knowledge is possible, necessitates an account of how such knowledge is acquired. The possibility of the acquisition of knowledge, in turn, requires an answer to the Paradox of Enquiry. The problems concerning the acquisition of knowledge are at the heart of the approach adopted in the DM.

0014 The discussion, in the DM⁶, concerning the acquisition of knowledge arises from the consideration of whether knowledge can be taught by one person to another,

² All Augustinian texts will be cited by title alone, while those texts by other authors will be cited by author and title.

³ Augustine regarded Plato, and Socrates, as holding sceptical views (*Acad.* 2.14) - a position which was also suggested by Cicero (*Acad.* 1.15-16; 1.44-46). Also, cf. *Acad.* 3.37, *ep.* 1.1, and *ep.* 118.16-21 for the view that the Academics were in fact simply Platonists who applied sceptical arguments as a means of defending their position against such philosophers as were incapable of grasping the truths of Platonism.

⁴ *v. inf.* § 2.3.1.

⁵ The Paradox will be considered at greater length in due course (*v. inf.* § 8.1.1).

⁶ This discussion takes place between Augustine and his son Adeodatus (shortly before his death at the age of 17) and, according to *conf.* 9.14, all of the ideas ascribed to Adeodatus are his own. However, it should be said that Augustine does not claim that the DM is the account of an actual, historical, discussion which took place.

and this is initiated through an analysis of language. The implicit background to the opening of the dialogue must be something like the following.

0015 Knowledge is deemed possible and, therefore, it must be able to be acquired. If knowledge is to be acquired, it must be acquired by means of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning involve some teacher transferring information such that some learner comes to know what she previously did not. Information transferral is achieved through telling or showing⁷, the primary mode, among humans, of such transfer is ‘telling’. Therefore, the discussion opens with a consideration of the purpose of speech.

Aug. quid tibi uideatur efficere uelle, cum loquimur?
(1)⁸

0016 The consideration of the wider question concerning the acquisition of knowledge, is initially the background to the preliminary questions about language which must firstly be clarified so as to enable progress to more central issues. As the discussion progresses, it becomes clear that, for Augustine, the issues of the acquisition of knowledge and of the nature of language are intimately connected; and it is only with a great deal of thought and discussion that the two are separated sufficiently to allow some degree of clarification surrounding the principal concern of the dialogue, namely the nature of knowledge acquisition.

0017 The opening question of the DM (*v. sup.* 0015) introduces two concepts of central concern to the discussion of language between Augustine and his sixteen year old son (*conf.* 9.14), Adeodatus: performance (*efficere*) and intention (*uelle*) in speech (*loqui*). Through these concepts a number of interrelated issues are introduced. Those most central to the dialogue are the role of the will in communicative processes; the

⁷ The importance of the telling/showing division in the dialogue is discussed at length by Burnyeat: 1987.

⁸ The DM quotations will simply be numbered, all other texts quoted will be cited by name.

question as to how a speech act achieves one's intention; and whether the speech act achieves this intention successfully or not (i.e. performance relative to speaker's intention). There is, therefore, an implicit series of interrelationships whereby, in a (linguistically) communicative process, one wills something, i.e. what one intends; one attempts to achieve this intention through the intermediary of speech; and one attains this intention, or not, through the ability of language to perform what is intended.

0018 This said, however, the major focus of the question is *what* one wants to accomplish through speech. The above interrelationships are signalled as crucial in attempting to answer this, but the issue which is introduced is concerned primarily with the end to which language is used and it is this end which is immediately focused upon in Adeodatus' answer and in the discussion of this answer which immediately follows.

0019 It is worth noting at this point that the dialogue proceeds along the Academic lines of arguing first one side of a question and then the other. Firstly it is argued that all teaching is through signs (DM 1-28) and then it is argued that no teaching is through signs (DM 29-35). The first line of argument, that teaching is through signs, will now be considered.

2.1. Teaching and Learning.

0020 The answer initially given to Augustine's opening question is that the purpose of speech is to teach or to learn.

Ad. ... aut docere aut discere.
(1)

The inclusion of learning within the description is promptly dismissed, for although one apparently asks questions so as to learn, one in fact asks questions so as to teach what it is that one wants (DM 1).

*...qui cum causas ab ea quaesisset maestitiae suae cotidianarumque
lacrimarum docendi, ut adsolet, non discendi gratia...*
(*conf.* 3.19)

0021 The analysis of the complexities of language into statements and questions is clearly inadequate, nevertheless it does serve to present Augustine's main thesis that the purpose of speech may be generally defined by the statement that one speaks so as to teach (Plato, *Crat.* 388b), and nothing more.

Aug. ...nihil aliud quam docere nos uelle intellego...
(1)

Therefore, whether language achieves this end must now depend on a clarification of what is understood by the additional concept '*docere*'. As the matter now stands this general definition of the purpose of speech implies that teaching is simply equated with the transfer or communication of information in general⁹.

0022 In the *Retractationes*, while stressing the fact that the DM is concerned with teaching and whether or not there is such a thing as a teacher, Augustine highlights another related concern, namely the object of teaching, '*scientiam*'.

*...de magistro. in quo disputatur et quaeritur et inuenitur magistrum non esse,
qui docet hominem scientiam nisi deum...*
(*retr.* 1.12.1)

The implication of this is that teaching involves the transfer of knowledge. Whether speech achieves what one intends, therefore, depends on whether it successfully teaches; that is to say, successfully transfers knowledge, and any answer to this must depend on a clearer understanding of what is meant by the term '*scientia*'. It is also necessary to clarify what implications arise from the belief that someone can be taught

by means of language and in such a way come to know something which he previously did not know.

0023 The opening question of the dialogue and the general answer to it raises a number of related issues: the role of the will in language, teaching and communication, and its role in knowledge acquisition; the nature of speech, its performance and processes; the question as to whether language in fact teaches, and, if so, how it does so and whether it does so successfully; the question as to what teaching actually is, and what is taught, or communicated, and the related issue as to what learning is and what is learned; and the central concerns of what knowledge is and how it is acquired.

2.1.1. Speech as Teaching: Singing.

0024 A first tentative definition of speech is given, by Adeodatus, as the producing, or uttering, of words.

Ad. ... si nihil est aliud loqui quam uerba promere...
(1)

0025 The objection is raised that if speech is nothing other than the uttering of words, then as singing is the uttering of words and as one often sings while alone, speech *qua* the uttering of words cannot be teaching. Speech in this sense cannot be defined as teaching as with no-one present to learn, one cannot intend to teach anything. Therefore, to teach one must *intend* to teach, there must be *something* to teach, and there must be *someone present* to learn.

⁹ Burnyeat: 1987, 8-9.

Ad. ...si nihil est aliud loqui quam uerba promere, uideo nos id facere, cum cantamus. sed cum saepe soli facimus nullo praesente qui discat, non puto nos docere aliquid uelle.

(1)

0026 From this objection it is clear that a more accurate definition is required of what speech is in itself.

2.1.1.1. Teaching as Reminding.

0027 There is a kind of teaching which occurs through reminding (*commemoratio*)¹⁰, which will be explicated in the course of the dialogue.

Aug. at ego puto esse quoddam genus docendi per commemorationem, magnum sane, quod in hac nostra sermocinatione res ipsa indicabit.

(1)

0028 There is an important distinction which Augustine makes at this point with his introduction of the concept of *commemoratio*. In the present discussion the focus is primarily on teaching, and only secondarily on learning: however, the distinction is made between the act of teaching which involves *commemorare* and the act of learning which involves *recordari*¹¹.

Aug. ...sed si tu non arbitraris nos discere cum recordamur nec docere illum qui commemorat, non resisto tibi...

(1)¹²

0029 ‘*Commemorare*’ means ‘to remind’ and is generally used with reference to others, *x* reminds *y* of *z* (*x* makes *y* remember *z*), but it may be used with reference to oneself, *x* reminds *x* of *z* (*x* makes herself remember *z*). In the present context, due to

¹⁰ Cf. *an. quant.* 34.

¹¹ The distinction highlighted in the DDC should be noted here: “*omnis doctrina uel rerum est uel signorum, sed res per signa discuntur*” (*doctr. chr.* 1.2.). The distinctions marked here and their relevance to the DM will be discussed below (§ 3).

¹² The negatives in this statement are not strictly relevant for Augustine merely wants Adeodatus to concede that there are two reasons for speaking, either to teach or remind. What is of concern to the following analysis is that Augustine proposes, whether Adeodatus concedes it or not, the notional division of *commemoratio* into *recordari* and *commemorare*.

the teach (*commemorare*) and learn (*recordari*) distinction, '*commemorare*' must be understood to mean 'remind' or perhaps more specifically, due to the close connection between teaching/reminding and speech, as 'to bring something to someone's recollection by speaking of it'. It should be noted that Augustine does use '*commemorare*' in the sense of 'to remind oneself' (v. *inf.* 0043). However, by distinguishing these two senses of 'remind' (*commemorare/recordari*) in DM 1 (0028), he analyses the dual nature of the process at play in the commemorative act (*commemoratio*).

0030 '*Recordari*', on the other hand, means 'to remember', 'to call to (one's own) mind', 'to recall'. Therefore, in the communicative process there is a sense in which *x* teaches *y* by means of language; that is to say, *x* brings *z* to the recollection of *y* by speaking of it, and that *y* recalls *z* by calling it to his own mind. This is a picture of the teaching/learning process whereby *x* reminds and *y* recalls. *Commemoratio*, therefore, involves two similar but distinct processes, the reminding of others and the recalling to oneself. These two aspects of the communicative process are central to the development of Augustine's argument, for in any act of reminding there is necessarily the active role of the learner in recalling.

0031 For present purposes it is felt adequate by Augustine to simply draw attention to the place of memory in the communicative processes and to the reminding/recalling distinction within these processes. With the point made that there is a kind of teaching through reminding, it follows that singing may simply be something which one does when alone (or speaking to oneself, for that matter) for the sake of reminding oneself of something.

Aug. ...sed si tu non arbitraris nos discere cum recordamur nec docere illum qui commemorat, non resisto tibi et duas iam loquendi causas constituo, aut ut

doceamus, aut ut commemoremus uel alios uel nos ipsos, quod etiam dum cantamus efficimus...

(1)

0032 That one may sing to remind oneself does not entail that one always sings to remind oneself, for one may sing, and indeed does so more often than to remind oneself, so as to give oneself pleasure.

Ad. ...rarum admodum est, ut ego cantem commemorandi me gratia, sed tantummodo delectandi.

(1)

0033 However, what gives one pleasure, in this sense, in song is the rhythm of the sound and so song cannot be identified with speech.

Aug. ...nonne adtendis id, quod te delectat in cantu, modulationem quandam soni esse? quae quoniam uerbis et addi et detrahi potest, aliud est loqui aliud cantare; nam et tibiis et cithara cantatur, et aues cantant, et nos interdum sine uerbis musicum aliquid sonamus, qui sonus cantus dici potest, locutio non potest...

(1)

0034 Based on this criticism of the identification of song and speech, speech is not to be understood simply as the production of sound. There is a certain rhythm in sound (*modulationem...soni*) such that it may be added to, or taken away from, words (*quae quoniam uerbis et addi et detrahi potest*) and yet speech minus this rhythm does not cease to be speech, i.e. words minus this rhythm are still words. While one can produce a musical sound without any words (*nos interdum sine uerbis musicum aliquid sonamus*) which is a song (*qui sonus cantus dici potest*) but is not speech (*locutio non potest*).

0035 The sounds of words are, for this reason, the concern of the grammarian, not the philosopher.

...sed quod sonat nihil ad dialecticam...[res] quae a grammaticis solarum aurium tractantur negotia.

(*dial.* 5.32-39)¹³

2.1.2. Speech as Teaching: Prayer.

0036 Prayer involves speech and yet God is neither taught nor reminded by humans.

Ad. uideretur, nisi me moueret, quod dum oramus utique loquimur, nec tamen deum aut doceri aliquid a nobis aut commemorari fas est credere.

(2)

However, prayer is an inner activity and so there is no need for speech.

Aug. nescire te arbitror non ob aliud nobis praeceptum esse, ut in clausis cubiculis¹⁴ oremus, quo nomine significantur mentis penetralia, nisi quod deus, ut nobis quod cupimus praestet, commemorari aut doceri nostra locutione non quaerit...quare non opus est locutione, cum oramus, id est sonantibus uerbis...

(2)

This consideration of prayer introduces the concept of inner process and of the rational aspect of humanity which is described as the ‘inner person’. It is inwardly that one must seek for the divine (*cura mort.* 7); this suggests that the divine is present to the rational aspect of the soul or is accessible through it.

Aug. qui enim loquitur, suae uoluntatis signum foras dat per articulatam sonum, deus autem in ipsis rationalis animae secretis, qui homo interior uocatur, et quaerendus et deprecandus est; haec enim sua templa esse uoluit.

(2)

The importance of the inner, rational, element is supported through the authority of Scripture and this in turn, implicitly, raises the important concept of faith or belief which is to be of major importance in the dialogue.

Aug. an apud apostolum non legisti: «nescitis quia templum dei estis et spiritus dei habitat in uobis»¹⁵ et «in interiore homine habitare Christum»¹⁶?

¹³ References to passages in the DD are to chapter and line number of *PL* 32.1409-20; the text used is Pinborg's in Darrell Jackson: 1975.

¹⁴ Matth. 6:6. Cf. also *s. dom. m.* 2.11.

¹⁵ I Cor. 3:16.

nec in propheta animaduertisti: «dicite in cordibus uestris et in cubilibus uestris compungimini. sacrificate sacrificium iustitiae et sperate in domino»¹⁷? ubi putas sacrificium iustitiae sacrificari nisi in templo mentis et in cubilibus cordis? ubi autem sacrificandum est, ibi et orandum.

(2)

2.1.2.1. Definition of Speech.

0037 Speech is given a second, expanded, definition:

Aug. qui...loquitur, suae uoluntatis signum foras dat per articulatum sonum...

(2)

The speaker produces (*foras dat*), through articulate sound (*per articulatum sonum*), a sign (*sign*) of his will (*suae uoluntatis*).

0038 Through speech one utters words so as to signify one's thought.

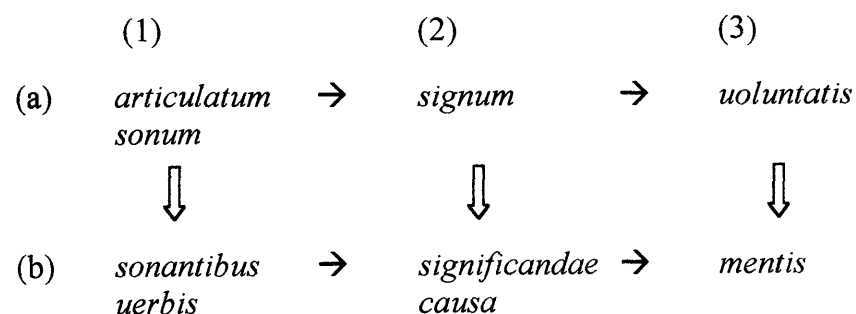
Aug. quare non opus est locutione, cum oramus, id est sonantibus uerbis, nisi forte, sicut sacerdotes faciunt, significandae mentis suae causa...

(2)

Therefore, speech consists of uttered, articulate, sound in the form of words with the addition of a signifying element which in some way allows these words to function as signs for one's thought or will.

0039 One can schematise these relations:

(D1)



¹⁶ Eph. 3:16-17.

¹⁷ Ps. 4:5-6 (Vulgate); 4:4-5 (RSV).

How each of these terms are to be understood and how they interrelate must be discovered. Horizontally (from (1) to (3)), the issues are how words/articulate sounds can produce a sign, that is, signify, and how this sign can signify the mind or will; and most importantly in the vertical direction (from (a) to (b)) is the question of the correlating of the will and the mind, and as to what exactly this mental element is.

0040 This definition of speech fits with the general view of teaching forwarded earlier in the dialogue, for in giving forth a sign of one's will, one is teaching or transferring information in the sense that one encourages the listener to recall what one wants her to recall.

2.1.2.2. Inner Speech and Inner Words.

0041 The objection, to the defence of prayer as an inner act, is raised that Christ taught the disciples words by which to pray (DM 2). Words, however, serve as reminders of the 'things themselves' (*res ipsas*); so, words are employed in prayer not for their own sake but so as to remind one of things.

Ad. nihil me omnino istuc mouet; non enim uerba, sed res ipsas eos uerbis docuit, quibus etiam se ipsi commonefacient, a quo et quid esset orandum, cum in penetralibus ut dictum est mentis orarent.

(2)

0042 Words do not need to be uttered but by thinking of the words one in effect speaks inwardly.

Aug. ...quamuis nullum edamus sonum, tamen, quia ipsa uerba cogitamus, nos intus apud animum loqui...

(2)

This raises the idea of inner and outer words and the question as to how they relate to each other in terms of the signification process.

0043 Further, the concept of inner speech supports the thesis that words are used so as to remind. Words are ‘fixed in’ the memory and are employed by the memory, by turning them over (as inner speech) so as to make the things themselves come to mind. Words are signs of these things.

Aug. ...sic quoque locutione nihil aliud agere quam commemorare, cum memoria, cui uerba inhaerent, ea reuoluendo facit uenire in mentem res ipsas, quarum signa sunt uerba.

(2)

0044 This final paragraph is extremely dense and in effect sums up, in broad outline, Augustine’s analysis of language (as it relates to knowledge acquisition). It will be worthwhile to briefly consider what is proposed in this sentence.

0045 What is taught by means of words is neither the speaker’s will nor his thoughts but rather it is the ‘things themselves’ which come into mind (*res ipsas... uerbis docuit; memoria... facit uenire in mentem res ipsas*). The perspective has changed here from that of the speaker (whose will/thought is taught) to that of the hearer (who is reminded by the words to call the things to his own mind). This change in perspective is extremely significant and reveals the twofold process at play in the communicative act: namely, that a word reminds listener *x* of the thing to which it refers (whatever that thing may be and in whatever sense it may be referred to), and can, therefore, teach *x* what speaker *y* is thinking or what it is that he wants *x* to think of. In this sense words teach things (in the sense of reminding the listener) and teach one’s thought/will (in that they serve as a sort of evidence, for the listener, for what the speaker wants or is thinking)

0046 Also, the purpose of speech is not teaching in some broad sense (as in DM 1: *Aug. ...nihil aliud quam docere nos uelle intellego...*) but rather as specifically directed towards reminding (*locutione nihil aliud agere quam commemorare*). Words are fixed in the memory (*memoria cui uerba inhaerent*) and the words are turned over in the

memory (*ea [uerba] reuoluendo*), which is to think them (*uerba cogitamus*) and to speak inwardly (*intus apud animum loqui*). In this way the memory, as it were, reminds itself and makes the things themselves come into the mind (*facit uenire in mentem res ipsas*). The process of recollecting is then an active one and when one hears a word, or thinks it to oneself, one uses it to access latent information through an act of the will.

0047 With this process in mind one can see how Augustine might use the terms ‘will’ and ‘thought/mind’ with some degree of interchangeability in regards to linguistic usage. For, if one accesses latent information through the intentional application of words, then it seems a reasonable assumption for Augustine that, when one speaks, one intends one’s listener to apply the same process and so access the information which one desires. What one wills is the accessing of the information which the word applies to, namely, what one has in one’s own mind when uttering the word.

0048 Finally, words are here crucially described as signs of the things which are brought to mind. The fact that words are signs raises a difficult question concerning how they are in fact to be understood as reminding, while the description of that which is brought to mind as ‘*res ipsas*’ also requires explanation.

2.2. Speech.

0049 It is clear thus far that there is outer speech, which occurs through uttered, articulate words; and there is inner speech, which occurs through words being thought or turned over in the memory.

0050 Words teach in that they serve as reminders; they are signs, which signify one's will, one's thought, or things themselves; and words make these things come to mind.

0051 The main questions which this preliminary discussion has revealed concern the role of memory and of reminding; the object of the teaching, or reminding, that is, what exactly are the *res ipsae* which can be brought to mind, and how this occurs; and what is the semiotic process at work, that is to say, what is a sign and how does it signify.

0052 Augustine pursues these questions while always remaining focused upon his central concern, namely, the question of the acquisition of knowledge. To this end the elements of telling, showing, and understanding are analysed. However, due to the nature of his enquiry the whole text is focused around the question as to the nature of *evidence* - what sort of evidence, if at all, are words and sentences, what is showing and what sort of showing is valid, and given valid evidence, how does one grasp it. Therefore, although the dialogue must be considered as an analysis of teaching, learning, language, and signs - all hinging of the question as to what knowledge is - each consideration is imbued with the issue of evidence.

0053 In much recent philosophical debate there is a division over the question of whether language is primarily an instrument for expressing truths or as a medium of social interaction (Harrison: 1979, 63). This, or something rather similar, would appear to be at the heart of the debate occurring within the DM - if language is used so as to teach, then teaching means providing with knowledge, and so how does language transmit knowledge, what does it transmit, what sort of grounds for evidence does it have and how reliable are they?

0054 Chomsky states, against the communication model as the ‘essential purpose’ of language, that language is ‘essentially a system for the expression of thought’ (Chomsky: 1976, 56-7). In the final analysis, Augustine may be seen to collapse these ideas together for his picture of language is one whereby it serves to express thought with the purpose of expressing it *to another*, and how he would divide these elements is unclear. Yet, as will be seen, in the DM it would seem that one can express one’s thoughts but that one cannot, as such, provide any new information to another for they can only be encouraged to consider their own thoughts, for no-one can, as the DM argues, access another’s thought. For Augustine words express one’s thoughts and attempt to communicate them, so words can express thoughts, but it is questionable whether they can be said to communicate them in any accurate sense.

2.3. Commemoratio.

0055 There are many issues surrounding the linguistic/semiotic processes in the communicative act and surrounding the nature of the knowledge which is intended to be transferred. These are considered in due course throughout the following discussion. However, there are two closely related themes of which a brief consideration at this point will serve to inform the remainder of this discussion. The first is the nature of evidence. At the close of DM 2, Augustine introduces the idea that words are signs, and this necessarily raises the possibility that what will be under discussion will in some way concern their function as evidence. Words *qua* signs transfer knowledge of something distinct and separate from themselves *qua* signs, and so the question arises as to the validity of the grounds by which they function as signs and as to the basis on which this knowledge can be said to rest.

0056 The discussion of signs will begin in the next section, but an accurate understanding of this discussion depends on the second related theme, namely ‘*commemoratio*’.

0057 Augustine has argued that the purpose of language is to teach, that there is a sort of teaching which is reminding, and then that the purpose of speech is nothing other than to remind (*nihil aliud agere quam commemorare*). These points, taken together with the general statement that words are signs raises the question as to what sort of signs words are.

0058 There had been an ancient controversy over the nature of evidence involving, originally, the medical Empiricists and Rationalists, which was later taken up by sceptics¹⁸ as a route of attack against the ‘dogmatic’ philosophers, primarily the Stoics¹⁹. This controversy arose from the division of knowledge into the evident (πρόδηλα), which can be known immediately (these are often directly observable and perceptible), and into the non-evident (ἄδηλα), which cannot be directly observed or apprehended²⁰. These non-evident matters, if at all knowable, must rest on the evidence of other, evident, truths. Therefore, all knowledge is either directly apprehended, as evident truths, or is grasped indirectly, as non-evident truths, by way of these evident truths (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.141).

0059 Most relevant to the discussion, at this moment, is that non-evident truths and the transition from evident to the apprehension of non-evident matters is discussed by means of signs and demonstrations (Sextus Empiricus, M. 7.24-6). Knowledge of

¹⁸ Discussed in Sextus Empiricus’ extensive consideration of signs and signification: PH 2. 97-133; M. 8.141-299.

¹⁹ Discussed by Allen: 2001, 87-146.

²⁰ The following discussion is a cursory overview of only those matters specifically relevant to this study, accordingly much of the interpretational difficulty is passed over. For a fuller discussion of this controversy cf. Allen: 2001.

non-evident matters is discovered by means of sign-inference and demonstrations from the evident (Sextus Empiricus, M. 7.25).

0060 The sign is understood, in a specific way, as that which is indicative of a non-evident thing (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.143). Just as non-evident matters can be divided into different categories (Sextus Empiricus, PH 2.97-98; M. 8.145-148) so too can the types of signs which reveal these different kinds of non-evident matters. The first type of non-evident things are naturally so and are forever beyond human apprehension, such as the invisible pores in the skin and the existence of void (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.146). Also, there are matters which are temporarily non-evident, such as the city of Athens to someone distant from it (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.145)²¹.

0061 Temporarily non-evident matters are revealed by ‘commemorative’ signs (σημεῖα ὑπομνηστικά), and naturally non-evident matters by ‘indicative’ signs (σημεῖα ἐνδεικτικά) (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.151; 8.156). The commemorative sign is defined as that which, having been observed in conjunction with the thing signified in a clear perception, brings us, as soon as it is presented and when the thing signified has become non-evident, to a recollection of the thing observed along with it and now no longer clearly perceived (as in the case of smoke and fire) (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.152). While the indicative sign is that which does not admit of being observed in conjunction with the thing signified, but entirely from its own nature and constitution (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.154).

0062 The commemorative sign, at first glance, would appear to fall under the genus of inductive generalisation. Taking smoke as a commemorative sign of fire, one can see that a limited number of past observations of smoke signalling fire, will in the future lead one to the generalisation that, on seeing smoke, there is also fire. However,

this is not strictly accurate to the origin of the controversy²², for it is not the fact of ‘conjunction in observation’ (συμπαράτηρησις) that is central but rather commemoration (ὑπόμνησις). The sign reminds one of what has been observed and remembered. The process is not one of inference, involving a rational grasp of the grounds for the move from evidence to conclusion, it is wholly memoristic²³.

0063 From this general description it would then be tempting to place words, as described by Augustine, within this classification of commemorative signs.

Augustine, as the recipient of the long tradition of semiotic theorising, can be seen to adopt many aspects of the commemorative model of signs in his linguistic analysis.

The commemorative sign is that which was accepted, in somewhat altered form, by the sceptics and much of Augustine’s refutation of words as valid grounds for learning rests on lines of argument which are themselves an altered form of the commemorative class of sign. As mentioned above (0055), the question of evidence and grounds for knowledge run throughout the dialogue, and an understanding of Augustine’s definition of words as signs which serve to remind will be essential to any clear understanding of the thesis which he defends as a whole concerning the acquisition of knowledge.

2.3.1. Recollection.

0064 A second, related, issue arises out of Augustine’s account of *commemoratio*.

When Augustine suggests that there is a type of teaching through reminding

(*quoddam genus docendi per commemorationem*, DM 1), it is unlikely that an ancient

²¹ The class of absolutely non-evident matters (Sextus Empiricus, M. 8.147) is passed over for the present as not relevant.

²² Allen: 2001, 110.

²³ Cf. Frede ‘An Empiricist View of Knowledge: Memorism’ in Everson: 1990, 225-50.

reader, or a modern reader for that matter, would fail to think of Plato's account of Recollection (ἀνάμνησις) which was adopted as a solution to the question of knowledge acquisition in the *Meno* (81c-d).

0065 Augustine would have been aware of the theory from Cicero (*Tusc.* 1.57-58)²⁴ and perhaps also from the *Phaedrus*²⁵ (249), which together with the *Phaedo* may have been familiar to him through the intermediary of Porphyry²⁶. Also, Augustine would have access to the doxographical tradition²⁷.

0066 The *Meno* is referred to by Augustine with regard to the transmigration of souls, recollection, and the slave boy experiment in the *de trinitate*.

unde Plato ille philosophus nobilis persuadere conatus est uixisse hic animas hominum et antequam ista corpora gererent, et hinc esse quod ea quae discuntur reminiscuntur potius cognita quam cognoscuntur noua. retulit enim puerum quendam nescio quae de geometrica interrogatum sic respondisse tamquam esset illius peritissimus disciplinae...

(*trin.* 12.24)

Recollection is also referred to directly in a letter to Nebridius.

nonnulli calumniantur aduersus Socraticum illud nobilissimum inuentum, quo adseritur non nobis ea, quae discimus, ueluti noua inseri, sed in memoriam recordatione reuocari...

(*ep.* 7.2)²⁸

0067 In the DM the idea of *commemoratio* is presented as a possible solution to the Paradox of Enquiry, as Recollection is in the *Meno*, and is used to challenge the belief that people are taught at all, as also is the case in the *Meno*.

ΣΩ. ...καὶ νῦν ἐρωτᾷς εἰ ἔχω σε διδάξαι, ὃς οὐ φημι διδασχὴν εἶναι ἀλλ' ἀνάμνησιν...

(Plato, *Men.* 81e-82a)

²⁴ Cf. Hagendahl: 1967, 486-553; Testard: 1958, vol. 1, 205-29; 261-6.

²⁵ That Augustine was, at least indirectly (cf. O'Daly: 1987, 70 n.197), aware of the content of the *Phaedrus* is seen from his reference to the contents of *Phaedr.* 248-249 in *civ.* 13.19.

²⁶ Cf. Courcelle: 1948, 226-9.

²⁷ Cf. Solignac: 1958.

²⁸ Cf. also *sol.* 2.35.

0068 In the DM Augustine is clearly employing the Platonic notion of Recollection in some manner. He does not defend the theory in entirely Platonic terms though, for, as will be argued, he avoids any sense in which there is necessitated the transmigration of souls, or pre-existence of the soul, but rather proposes a form of another Platonic notion, namely, illumination²⁹.

2.3.2. Commemorative Signs and Recollection.

0069 There would appear, therefore, to be a certain tension within Augustine's presentation of teaching as reminding where words are signs *and* reminders, and where learning is Recollection. Whether one of these interpretations is false or whether both may, in some sense, be preserved in a form compatible with one another will be at the heart of much of the following discussion; and in the solution to this issue lies the answer to Augustine's analysis of knowledge acquisition in general, and to the facility of words for providing such a solution. It will be found that the Platonic theory of Recollection, in an adapted form, is essentially the correct interpretation of *commemoratio* in the DM; however, it will none the less be found that the approach to Augustine's theory of language *qua* linguistic signs from the class of commemorative sign will prove an extremely informative method for penetrating this theory.

²⁹ Although it may be argued (cf. White: 1976, 199-215) that the Seventh Letter is genuine and its philosophical ideas on illumination, etc., coherent with Plato's epistemological development, what is of importance to this study is that the letter was accepted in the ancient world as genuine and so the philosophical contents would have been handed down as part of the Platonic tradition.

3. The Problem of Communication.

3.1. Words are Signs.

0070 Language is classified as belonging to the analysis of signs, for words are signs.

Aug. constat ergo inter nos uerba signa esse.
Ad. constat.

(3)

Signs are described in an extremely general manner, for a sign is a sign in that it signifies something.

Aug. quid? signum nisi aliquid significet, potest esse signum?
Ad. non potest.

(3)

0071 However, for all of its generality, this description is nevertheless informative. Augustine is not overly concerned with signs *per se* but rather is concerned with the analysis of signs in terms of information transfer, and in this respect words are signs *par excellence*. Signs are focused on in two particular ways: that they *signify* and that they signify *something*. This may appear somewhat tautologous; however, when one considers that Augustine is suiting his description to a consideration of linguistic signs, it raises interesting and fundamental questions concerning the nature of language. For there remains the question as to how a semiotic analysis accords to an analysis of language. This is to say, basically and of primary interest in the context of the discussion in the DM, does ‘signify’ correspond to ‘mean’ and if so in what sense is ‘meaning’ to be understood and how are its underlying processes elucidated by a semiotic approach?

0072 Also, there is the question as to what this *something* is, that is signified by a word *qua* sign. If a word is a sign in that it must signify something, the implication is that Augustine supports a referential theory of meaning.

0073 These questions are progressively explicated throughout the dialogue and will be discussed in due course. However, for an understanding of Augustine's position with regards to these issues it will be necessary to clarify Augustine's approach to signs.

3.2. Signs.

0074 Much of Augustine's thought revolves around the nature of abstraction and the philosophy of relations. As a young man he found the idea of an immaterial God difficult to conceptualise, difficult to abstract from the everyday material reality around him. His attraction to Manichaeism and repulsion from Christianity lay, to a large degree, in an overly materialistic appreciation of God (*conf.* 6.4). Through the teachings of Ambrose (*conf.* 6.4 ff.) he began to think of a Christian God in a complex and intellectually satisfying manner and was soon drawn to the transcendental philosophical system of the Neoplatonists³⁰. His ruminations on the nature of abstraction perhaps culminated in his great work on the Trinity, developed and explicated at length in his *de trinitate* - an interpretation aided in no small part by an application of relational philosophy (gained from a reading of Aristotle's *Categories*, *conf.* 4.28), together with the transcendentalism of Neoplatonic thought³¹.

³⁰ The famous exposure to '*quosdam Platoniorum libros ex graeca lingua in latinam uersos*' (*conf.* 7.13-27). For a survey of scholarship on the contents of these texts see Hadot: 1971, 201-10.

³¹ Porphyry had defended the position that the *Categories* were neither simply a classification of the material realm (Plotinus, 6.3) nor a classification of all being (as held by the Peripatetics), but rather that it was mainly concerned with language and logical analysis (Porphyry, *in Cat.* 57.7-8). Therefore, Augustine felt no conflict in employing the categorical approach in his analysis of the

0075 This concern with abstraction interpenetrates every area of Augustine's thought, and is a factor in his lifelong fascination with language and, more fundamentally, with signs. Any item can be viewed simply as a thing or can be viewed *simultaneously* as a things and as sign.

0076 In the *de doctrina christiana*³² Augustine feels the need to distinguish things *qua* things from signs *qua* signs, and in so doing makes it clear that in the opening book of the DDC he wants to consider things *qua* things.

*res... quae non ad significandum aliquid adhibentur, sicuti est lignum, lapis, pecus atque huiusmodi cetera sed non illud lignum, quod in aquas amaras Moysen misisse legimus, ut amaritudine carerent*³³ ...
(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

Insofar as they signify, things can also be signs.

namque ita res sunt, ut aliarum etiam signa sint rerum.
(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

While all signs, even those whose entire function consists in signifying (such as words), are also things.

omne signum etiam res aliqua est; quod enim nulla res est, omnino nihil est...
(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

0077 Augustine's distinction between signs and things is such that there is nothing which is exclusively a sign or which is exclusively a thing, but rather there is a single item with both aspects continually present. This item can be considered, in abstraction, in one aspect or the other while never ceasing to be both³⁴. This idea interpenetrates all of the fundamental ideas discussed in the DM, and in general reflects Augustine's view of the human condition: signs and sign theory for Augustine

transcendentalism of Neoplatonism and Christianity. That Augustine followed the syncretising approach, of the 3rd century, to Plato and Aristotle, cf. *acad.* 3.42 where they are said to participate in '*una uerissimae philosophiae disciplina*' (cf. Cicero, *acad.* 1.4.17; 2.5.15).

³² Henceforth DDC.

³³ Exod. 15:25.

³⁴ Augustine's approach to these, and related issues is influenced by the Porphyrian categorical analysis where ontological aspects of the world can be linguistically analysed and abstracted. This approach,

largely embrace everything in human experience (DDC 2.1-3). Indeed, as can be seen in the broad scope of his definition of signs in the DDC (*doctr. chr.* 1.2.; cf. 0080), signs are whatever can be considered relationally or are put to that use.

0078 Therefore, to move beyond signs and the realm of semiotics one must extend one's consideration into the realm of the non-relational, that is, the realm of transcendence. The route to this is achieved through an analysis of the relational and the application of the intellect (as that facet of the human being which can abstract and therefore give consideration to things non-relationally) so as to abstract items and therefore think about them in themselves and non-relationally³⁵.

3.2.1. Definition of Signs.

0079 Although the concept of 'sign' and the process of signification are referred to in numerous works by Augustine, and are in fact directly discussed in a number of other works³⁶, these are never actually considered for their own sake. The discussions of signs always concern a wider purpose and thus any definition given is affected by this context. Consideration will be given so as to contextualise, as far as necessary, Augustine's primary definitions of signs and to analyse, as far as possible, what it was that he understood a sign to be and how he understood it to function.

0080 The main discussion which directly relates to signs is in the DDC where two related definitions are given.

together with the Stoic logical considerations of ambiguity will play an important role in Augustine's consideration of language and its role in knowledge acquisition (*v. inf.* § 5.2.1.2.3; § 5.6.2 and § 6.1).

³⁵ The Platonic dimension of this approach will be discussed below (§ 9).

³⁶ Most notably in the *de dialectica*, *de magistro*, and *de doctrina christiana*.

D1 *signa res...quae ad significandum aliquid adhibentur.*
(doctr. chr. 1.2)

D2 *signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire.*
(doctr. chr. 2.1)

In the *de dialectica*³⁷ the definition of sign is:

D3 *signum est quod et se ipsum sensui et praeter se aliquid animo ostendit.*
(dial. 5.9-10)

0081 Of particular importance in understanding these definitions is that in DDC Augustine is concerned with the interpretation of scripture and the rules which may be employed in the interpretative process:

sunt praecepta quaedam tractandarum scripturarum...
(doctr. chr. praef. 1)

This depends on the process of discovery and of presentation:

duae sunt res quibus nititur omnis tractatio scripturarum, modus inueniendi quae intellegenda sunt et modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt.
(doctr. chr. 1.1)

0082 The main focus is on learning (*modus inueniendi quae intellegenda sunt*)³⁸ and teaching (*modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt*)³⁹ so as to facilitate the interpretation of scripture (*tractatio scripturarum*). In this context Augustine is not concerned with signs *qua* signs but rather with their use toward a specific end⁴⁰. He goes on to state that all teaching is of things or signs⁴¹,

omnis doctrina uel rerum est uel signorum...

³⁷ Henceforth referred to as DD.

³⁸ Augustine's use of '*inuentio*' is significantly altered from its use as a technical term from rhetoric (*ad Her.* 1.3); as Green: 1995, p.12 n.1.

³⁹ These two phrases (*modus inueniendi...modus proferendi...*) constitute a general definition of '*doctrina*', which accords with the overall conclusion arrived at in the DM (v. inf. § 11).

⁴⁰ This practical exercise, which is taken up, to an extent, in DDC, is hinted at in DM (46) in which a consideration of the use of words, signs *par excellence* for Augustine, is postponed until a later date: '*sed de tota utilitate uerborum, quae, si bene consideretur, non parua est, alias...requiremus*'.

⁴¹ In the DM Augustine approaches this systematically with (1) signs taught by signs, DM 7-18; (2) things taught by signs, DM 22-28; and (3) things taught through themselves, DM 29-32.

but that things are learned through signs⁴²,

...sed res per signa discuntur.
(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

In D₁ the context is one in which Augustine wants to distinguish things *qua* things from signs *qua* signs, and in so doing makes clear that in the opening book of DDC he wants to consider things *qua* things (*doctr. chr.* 1.2; cf. 0076).

0083 Therefore, with these specifics of context clarified what remains is that signs are things which are ‘used’ (*adhibentur*) purposively so as to signify (*ad significandum*) something else (*aliquid*). One should consider however whether in D₁ the person who uses the sign so as to signify need necessarily be active in the sense of giving the sign rather than being more generally actively engaged in the signification process, whether that be in ‘using’ signs through, say, speaking, or ‘using’ signs through, say, interpreting what a cloudy sky means. That is to say, Augustine leaves open the question as to where exactly ‘purpose’ and ‘use’ need lie in the signification process.

0084 The definition given in D₁ has rightly been called ‘general’⁴³, however that is not to say that the definition is not of a fundamental nature. The other definitions (D₂ and D₃) may be more specific to their own contexts but it is D₁ which is concerned with the distinction between thing and sign, between thing *qua being* and thing *qua signifying*⁴⁴.

*...memoriterque teneamus id nunc in rebus considerandum esse quod sunt,
non quod aliud etiam praeter se ipsas significant.*
(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

⁴² This statement is contentious in light of the conclusions reached in the DM and will be considered below (§ 8).

⁴³ Darrell Jackson: 1972, 94.

⁴⁴ In the DDC things are considered first - they are primary in that they are considered due to their *being* - while signs are considered second in that they have *being* but mainly in that they also *signify*. For this reason Augustine considers words as fundamental in semiotics in that their whole *being* rests in their *signifying*.

This distinction sets forth what it is that makes a thing a sign, namely that it is a thing (*res*) which is used (*adhibentur*) so as to signify (*ad significandum*) something (*aliquid*).

0085 Therefore, for Augustine, the sign relation is quite clearly triadic⁴⁵, necessarily involving,

- (1) Sign (*res qua signum*)
- (2) what is signified (*aliquid*)
- (3) the subject/object for whom the sign is used to signify something (*adhibentur*)⁴⁶.

0086 As has been noted (0082), in the context of the DDC, much of Augustine's concern is to distinguish things from signs in any interpretative process so that things *qua* things can be clearly considered without any confusion with things *qua* signs (*doctr. chr.* 1.2). Augustine then is clearly making the differentiation in D₁ between things considered in themselves and things considered in that they signify - whether that be that they are interpreted as signifying or are intended to signify. This definition must then be considered as both general and, for that very reason, as primary.

0087 While Augustine defines a *res* as, properly (*proprie*⁴⁷), something which is not used so as to signify something else,

R1 *proprie...res appellauit, quae non ad significandum aliquid adhibentur*
(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

it is also used, less properly, to refer to anything at all that exists - i.e. whatever is not nothing. This is inferred from a point made about signs, which also fall under the term '*res*':

⁴⁵ Markus: 1994, 71; Darrell Jackson: 1972, 96.

⁴⁶ Of particular interest is the specifics of the grammatical structure of the definition given by Augustine, especially the use of the passive main verb and the 'purposive' gerundive construction. The significance of these will be considered below (§ 3.3.4).

meant is not some general sense whereby signs signify ‘something or other distinct from themselves’ but rather with ‘*aliquid*’ Augustine is employing terminology something like the Stoic use of the term ‘ $\tau\iota$ ’ for the primary genus in their ontology⁴⁸. The reason behind this usage, however, is certainly not ontological in Augustine’s case, but may be better seen as a terminological expedient in that the use of ‘*aliquid*’ gives a broad scope for the possible *significata* without bringing any ontological implications as to the nature of those *significata*.

0091 The question as to what sort of a *res* it is that a sign signifies will very much depend on what sort of sign and what sort of semiotic relation one is considering. At present it will suffice to say that what is signified must, at the very least, be a *res* in the ‘improper’ sense of a thing which is not nothing.

0092 In the definitions considered there is a crucial term which is passed over, namely, ‘*significare*’. In the definition of ‘sign’, with regards to the actual process of signifying there are two main considerations: *signa qua res*, namely, signs as they are; and *signa qua signa*, namely, signs as they signify. It is relevant that Augustine’s interest with signs is utterly bound up with the question of the acquisition of knowledge and hence with the nature of knowledge itself and with that of reality.

0093 From the definitions given in D₂ and D₃, where the focus is on the specifics of the sign in the interpretational process (D₂) and in logical processes (D₃), it is clear that the sign creates an impression on the senses.

D₂ *signum...praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus*

D₃ *signum...se ipsum sensui...ostendit*

Through this impression it somehow causes something else to come into one’s thought.

⁴⁸ Cf. Alexander Aphrodisias, in *Ar. Top.* 301.19-25; Sextus Empiricus, M. 2.330; M. 10.218; Seneca,

D₂ *signum...aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire*

D₃ *signum...praeter se aliquid animo ostendit.*

0094 The signifying process, as far as it can be understood from the evidence of the definitions, is such that a sensible sign strikes one's perception in such a way as to show something to one's mind, or to cause something to enter one's thinking. The process involved from impression to thought is as yet unclear.

0095 As defined, the process can be schematised. In the table below, which compares the terminology employed in Augustine's sign theory, there will be inserted in addition to those passages discussed above (DD 5.9-10; DDC 1.2; DDC 2.1) the two sections where Augustine's comes closest in the DM to a general description of the sign (DM 2 and DM 3).

(D2)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DD 5	<i>signum</i>	<i>sensui</i>	<i>ostendit</i>	<i>aliquid praeter se</i>	<i>animo</i>
DM 2	<i>signum (uerbum)</i>	<i>memoria</i>	<i>facit uenire</i>	<i>res ipsas</i>	<i>in mentem</i>
DM 3	<i>signum</i>		<i>significat</i>	<i>aliquid</i>	
DDC1	<i>signa</i>		<i>ad significandum</i>	<i>aliquid</i>	<i>adhibentur</i>
DDC2	<i>signum</i>	<i>speciem sensibus</i>	<i>faciens uenire</i>	<i>aliud aliquid ex se</i>	<i>in cogitationem</i>

0096 Therefore, a sign is a material item which affects the senses, (1) & (2), but that it can be accessed memorially and therefore has an intelligible or immaterial element. Also, there is, clearly, an item which is signified or referred to, and yet how exactly it

is signified or referred to very much depends upon what type of a thing it is (4). That something is a sign depends upon it being used as such and accessed by a mind, to which it signifies an item (5). Signs have a twofold impact on their receiver: there is that which strikes the senses (the impression) and that which is caused to come to mind. Finally, the signification process in some way 'shows' something, or 'causes it to come', to mind.

3.3. Signs as Evidence.

3.3.1. Indication and Representation.

0097 In classical Latin '*signum*' had two main senses: indication (cf. Cicero, *div.* 1.82-83; *fin.* 5.74; *de or.* 2.174; *Lael.* 17.62) and representation (cf. Cicero, *div.* 1.77; Lucretius 1.318)⁴⁹. In general terms an indication is that which indicates or points towards something, such as smoke indicating fire, while a representation is that which represents or resembles something, as a drawing of fire represents fire. In Greek the indicative sign was called a 'σημεῖον'. This word and its cognates do not appear to have been used in the sense of 'representation'.

0098 In Augustine's definitions, there is no concern in these contexts with the sign as representation, but rather, as a student taught in the traditional elements of the rhetorical arts (DDC 4.2) and as a thinker in the Greek philosophical tradition, Augustine focuses upon signs as indications. Signs are of interest to Augustine in that they function in such a way as to lead the mind to something beyond themselves, and although representative signs may be seen to do this also, what is of concern to

⁴⁹ Kirwan: 1989, 37.



Augustine is not the representational nature of signs, but specifically their indicational nature.

0099 That Augustine is less concerned with the formal relationship of signs and their objects than with the conceptual relationship is seen in his lack of interest in discussion of ‘nature’ and ‘convention’, and the related issue of ‘correctness of names’, with regards to signs and language.

0100 The idea of ‘the correctness of names’⁵⁰ (ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης⁵¹) is a recurrent theme in Western philosophy, in one way or another, from the Sophistic movement in Greece of the Fifth Century BCE up to debates of the present day. However, in Augustine’s DM, his most specific and protracted discussion of the ‘Philosophy of Language’⁵², there is no mention of ‘the correctness of names’ nor of the related ideas of ‘nature’ versus ‘convention’⁵³.

0101 Language was a common concern of the Sophists and their analysis of it took many directions and many forms⁵⁴. Those areas which concerned the idea of correctness in language were ὀρθοεπεία⁵⁵ and ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης. It is most likely that both terms were technical in nature and distinct in their areas of concern: ὀρθοεπεία, connected most notably to Protagoras⁵⁶, concerned correctness of diction and would primarily have been directed towards general linguistics, particularly

⁵⁰ The issues of ‘nature’ and ‘convention’ extend beyond the bounds of language, but for the purpose of this discussion they will be considered within this limit.

⁵¹ Plato, *Euthd.* 277e; *Cra.* 383a.

⁵² This rather anachronistic term is perhaps the most accurate description of what Augustine’s analysis of language amounts to in the DM. Philosophy of Language, in a general sense, is perhaps most succinctly defined as “[t]he general attempt to understand the components of a working language, the relationship the understanding speaker has to its elements, and the relationship they bear to the world...” (S. Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford, 1994).

⁵³ Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 1.148-154 on nature and convention in general.

⁵⁴ Cf. Guthrie: 1969, 176-225; 261-319; Kerferd: *The Sophistic Movement*, 1981, 68-82; Rankin: 1983, 13-63.

⁵⁵ Diogenes Laertius 9.48; Plato, *Phdr.* 267c.

⁵⁶ Cf. Plato, *Phdr.* 267c. On Protagoras in general, cf. *RE* 23 (1957); Guthrie: 1969, 261-269; Rankin: 1983, 30-35.

poetics and grammar⁵⁷; while ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης, connected most notably to Prodicus⁵⁸, appears to have been more particularly concerned with what might be termed semantics⁵⁹.

0102 Closely connected to the Sophists' concern with language, and with 'the correctness of names' is the nature/convention controversy (νομός/φύσις)⁶⁰. This controversy interpenetrated a great deal of Sophistic thinking in the latter part of the Fifth Century BCE and was central to the issues of language in general and of 'the correctness of names' particularly. For to ask whether there is such a thing as a correctness of names is to imply the prior question as to whether names are merely conventional (or, more extremely stated, arbitrary) or inherently natural⁶¹.

⁵⁷ There is intense debate surrounding this topic but germane is that the term is cited in the list of titles of Democritus' works (Diogenes Laertius 9.48). The fact that ὀρθοεπεία is taken together with γλῶσσαι and Homer would tend towards an interpretation more in accord with correct diction rather than semantics or more philosophical concerns. That Protagoras was a fellow citizen (of Abdera) and younger contemporary (b. c.485 BCE) of Democritus (b. 460-57 BCE) may add to the position that Protagoras would be influenced to some extent by Democritus' particular concern with the linguistic aspect of correctness in language implied by this term (cf. Fehling, in Classen: 1976, 344-345). As Pfeiffer states (Pfeiffer: 1968, 39) it is extremely difficult to attempt a coherent reconstruction of any theory of ὀρθοεπεία from the fragmentary references which survive, but what seems most plausible is that the rhetorical education consisted to some extent in being able "to distinguish which words and sentences are correctly (ὀρθῶς) formed and which not..." (cf. Plato, *Prt.* 339a).

⁵⁸ Plato, *Euthd.* 277e; *Cra.* 384b. On Prodicus in general, cf. *RE* 23 (1957); Guthrie: 1969, 274-280; Rankin: 1983, 45-52; Ambrose, in Anton & Preus: 2, 1983, 129-144.

⁵⁹ Following on from Protagoras, the major Sophist involved in questions of language was clearly Prodicus of Ceos. Prodicus' approach to language (cf. Plato, *Prt.* 337a-c; 340ab), even though presented in hostile sources (Plato, *Men.* 75e; cf. Guthrie: 1969, 176), can be seen to tend towards the analysis of language in terms of meaning, or semantics (cf. Pfeiffer: 1968, 41). The picture one gains of Prodicus' method is one whereby two or three words of apparently the same meaning are analysed so as to reveal that their precise meanings are in fact distinct. The rare expression ὀρθότης, occurs in Aristophanes, with this same emphasis (Aristophanes, *ra.* 1181). The discussion of poetry in the Aristophanes is not concerned with the form of words (as in the 'Protagorean' passage of the *nu.* 658 ff.), but with their meaning. All of the direct references to Prodicus in Plato and Aristotle (DK: 84 A 13-19) support this interpretation also (Pfeiffer: 1968, 39-40).

⁶⁰ Cf. Kerferd: *The Sophistic Movement*, 1981, 111-130.

⁶¹ On a natural theory of language, cf. Epicurus, *ep. Hdt.* 75-76; *nat.* 28, 31.10.2-12, 28.31.13.23-14.12; Diogenes of Oenoanda 10.2.11-5.15; Lucretius 5.1028-1090; the position forwarded by Cratylus in Plato, *Cra. passim*; while on a conventional theory cf. the position forwarded by Hermogenes in Plato, *Cra. passim*.

0103 The issue concerning νομός and φύσις in language itself concerns two separate distinctions. These distinctions would appear to have first been recognised, or at least formulated, by Democritus⁶². The issue is well summed up in Barnes:

There are two quite distinct questions involved... The first... concerns the *origins* of language, or of 'names': was language deliberately created and imposed by a 'name-giving' person..? or did language gradually evolve from brutish grunts and growls, without the intervention of any conscious agent?... The second question concerns the relation between language and the world: does language fit the world naturally, like skin on an animal? or is it an artificial matching, like clothes on an Edwardian *belle*? Are names fixed to what they name by a natural adhesive? or is the glue man-made?⁶³

The first distinction is concerned with the actual *development* of language in humans.

However, this is often, and easily, confused with the second distinction; for even if one accepts that there was at some distant time in the past a name-giver, the question still remains as to whether he/she imposed names naturally suited to their objects (i.e. there is inherently something doggy in the word [dog]⁶⁴) or whether the names bear no relation to their objects and are arbitrarily imposed⁶⁵.

0104 The second, and more important distinction in relation to Augustine's analysis of signs and language, is concerned with the relationship between language and reality. The significance of νομός and φύσις in this regard is discussed at length in Plato's *Cratylus*:

ΕΡΜ. Κρατύλος φησιν ὅδε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὀνόματος ὀρθότητα εἶναι ἐκάστω τῶν ὄντων φύσει πεφυκυῖαν, καὶ οὐ τοῦτο εἶναι

⁶² Cf. Barnes: 1979, 466.

⁶³ Barnes: 1979, 466-7.

⁶⁴ The following conventions, as used in Ebbesen (1990, 147), will be employed henceforth:

<dog> = a thing which is a dog

/dog/ = the concept of a dog

[dog] = the word 'dog';

adding:

\dog\ = the 'sayable' (*dicibile*) of dog.

⁶⁵ Cf. Barnes: 1979, 466-70, for an interesting discussion on Democritus' early position in the debate whereby he may perhaps be seen to hold that there is a natural origin of language (i.e. no name-giver): (68 B 5, DK: 2, 1952, 135-136; Diodorus Siculus, 1.8.3); whilst holding that names are conventional in their relationship to reality (68 B 26, DK: 2, 1952, 148; Proclus, *in Cra.* 16 p.5, 25 Pasqu.). Cf. also on this subject, 68 B 2; 68 B 122a; 68 B 142; 68 B 145, DK: 2, 1952, as discussed by Barnes.

ὄνομα ὃ ἂν τινες ξυνθέμενοι καλεῖν καλῶσι, τῆς αὐτῶν φωνῆς
 μόριον ἐπιφθεγγόμενοι, ἀλλὰ ὀρθότητά τινα τῶν ὀνομάτων
 πεφυκέναι καὶ Ἕλλησι καὶ βαρβάροις τὴν αὐτὴν ἄπασιν...
 (Plato, *Cra.* 383a-b)

ΕΡΜ. Καὶ μὴν ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες...οὐ δύναμαι πεισθῆναι ὥς
 ἄλλη τις ὀρθότης ὀνόματος ἢ ξυνθήκη καὶ ὁμολογία. ἐμοὶ γὰρ
 δοκεῖ, ὃ τι ἂν τίς τῷ θῆται ὄνομα, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ὀρθόν...οὐ
 γὰρ φύσει ἐκάστῳ πεφυκέναι ὄνομα οὐδὲν οὐδενί, ἀλλὰ νόμῳ
 καὶ ἔθει τῶν ἐθισάντων τε καὶ καλούντων.
 (Plato, *Cra.* 384c-d)

The central focus in the *Cratylus* is on the relationship of words, and language in general, to their objects: that is, how [dog] fundamentally relates to <dog>.

0105 The implication, inherent in such an analysis of language whereby one attempts to understand its relationship to reality, is necessarily one of causality. That is to say, when one asks whether a word is natural or conventional, one is essentially asking what caused it, what caused it to have the form, structure, which it has: in simple terms, a natural explanation would be that words are caused by reality, while a conventional explanation would be that they are caused by human beings. Plato, being fundamentally interested in the cause of things, is also interested in the cause of words.

0106 An important term in Plato's analysis⁶⁶, and an important step towards gaining a footing on the level at which Augustine is involved in the debate, is 'σημαίνω' in the sense of 'to show by a sign', 'to indicate', 'to make known', 'to signify', and in its general sense, 'to mean'.

ΣΩ. ...ὃ γὰρ ἄναξ καὶ ὁ ἔκτωρ σχεδόν τι ταῦτόν σημαίνει...
 (Plato, *Cra.* 393a)

⁶⁶ The ostensible conclusion of the *Cratylus* is that the causes of words, and the objects of verbal 'meaning', are Forms (cf. *Crat.* 439c-440b). That Augustine held a similar belief concerning the causes of the 'meanings' of words and their objects will be elaborated below (§ 5.2.1.2.5.6).

ΣΩ. ...εἰ δὲ ἐν ἑτέραις συλλαβαῖς ἢ ἐν ἑτέραις τὸ αὐτὸ σημαίνει, οὐδεν πρᾶγμα...

(Plato, *Cra.* 393d)⁶⁷

Words ‘signify’ and it is therefore a small step to arrive at the conclusion that words are, in some sense, signs.

0107 Although the discussion of ‘nature’ and ‘convention’ long remained a philosophical topic worthy of discussion⁶⁸, much of relevance to the debate came, for Augustine, to fall within the areas of logic, broadly speaking, and semiotics, more specifically.

0108 Augustine forwards the thesis that words are conventional (DDC 2.37), in that they are agreed among humans, but he also seems to hold that they are, in some sense, naturally related to reality (DD 6). That is to say, they are imposed among humans by humans, but that their imposition is determined by their natural relationship with that which they refer to. This interpretation is further strengthened by his use of etymology. In any instance where he employs the etymologising approach, the implication is that there is a relationship between word sound and the item referred to. Augustine states that the origin of words is important to any linguistic analysis.

*omne uerbum...quattuor quaedam necessario uocat in quaestionem: originem suam, uim, declinationem, ordinationem.*⁶⁹
(*dial.* 6.1-3)

Yet in the discussion in the DD Augustine does not pay any heed to whether words are natural or conventional but rather is concerned with the futility of tracing the origin of words *qua* utterances.

de origine uerbi quaeritur, cum quaeritur unde ita dicatur, res mea sententia nimis curiosa et minus necessaria. neque hoc eo mihi placuit dicere quod

⁶⁷ These are the first two occurrences of σημαίνω, thereafter it occurs *passim*.

⁶⁸ Cf. Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 10.3.4.

⁶⁹ *origo*, *declinatio* and *ordinatio* are those headings under which the *de lingua latina* of Varro is divided (LL 7.110; 8.1).

*Ciceroni*⁷⁰ quoque idem uidetur. quis enim egeat auctoritate in re tam perspicua?

(dial. 6.3-8)

Augustine criticises the practice of etymologising on two grounds: it is an endless task,

*...ineptum esset aggredi quod persequi profecto infinitum est*⁷¹
(dial. 6.9-10)

*Stoici autumant, quos Cicero in hac re ut Cicero inridet*⁷¹, *nullum esse uerbum, cuius non certa explicari origo possit. et quia hoc modo eos urgere facile fuit, si diceret hoc infinitum esse, quibus uerbis alicuius uerbi originem interpretaris, eorum rursus a te origo <quaeratur, aiunt hoc> quaerendum esse...*

(dial. 6.39-44);

and it is like interpreting dreams in that it depends upon one's ingenuity⁷²,

Huc accedit quod ut somniorum interpretatio ita uerborum origo pro cuiusque ingenio iudicatur.

(dial. 6.12-13)

Augustine then proceeds to etymologise so as to prove his own point⁷³ that it is a futile and endless pursuit. When he does indulge in etymologising elsewhere⁷⁴, it should be said that it is always so as to clarify or elucidate some point which he is making, and which is simply reinforced by the etymologising. Augustine never criticises etymology in the sense that it is erroneous but rather that it is beyond our scope to penetrated back in time so as to successfully resolve all of the etymological issues involved.

⁷⁰ Cf. Darrell Jackson, *de dialectica*, p.127 n.3: '*in enodandis autem nominibus quod miserandum sit laborantis...quam periculosa consuetudo*' (Cicero, ND 3.62).

⁷¹ '*magnam molestiam suscepit et minime necessariam primus Zeno post Cleanthes deinde Chrysippus...uocabulorum cur quidque ita appellatum sit causas explicare*' (Cicero, ND 3.63).

⁷² Plato presents Socrates, in the *Cratylus*, as a master of such ingenuity. Socrates is shown to effectively argue for and against both theses at dispute in the discussion.

⁷³ There is a degree of disingenuity in the following discussion of etymologies and it would appear, as can also be seen in Cicero (ND 3.62-63), that both take their refutation as an excuse to exhibit their own skill and inventiveness in manipulating etymologies. Such an exhibition of ingenuity also occurs in Plato's *Cratylus*.

⁷⁴ Notably in DM 12.

0109 In the DDC 2 he explicitly describes words, *qua* utterances, as conventional⁷⁵, while in the DD, he accepts, up to a point, the sensory basis of the origin of words.

quam persequi non quidem ultra soni similitudinem possumus, sed hoc non semper utique possumus.

(*dial.* 6.111-113)

Augustine accepts that there should be investigation into the etymologies of some words but that as far as one can proceed is to the similarity of sound (*soni similitudinem*). To this degree Augustine would appear to follow something similar to the Stoic position in that words can be related to reality by means of a sort of 'phonetic' representation (Origen, *Cels.* 1.24)⁷⁶, but like the Stoics he too feels that etymology is not crucial to the proper investigation of language, or logic (Diogenes Laertius 7.83).

0110 The discussion in the DD makes no claim to attempt an analysis of the relation of language to reality, but rather takes the topic of the origin of uttered words as neither central to his concerns with language nor even possible. What is of interest to Augustine is an understanding of what words signify.

Ergo ad te iam pertinet iudicare, utrum 'uerbum' a uerberando an a uero solo an a uerum boando dictum putemus, an potius unde sit dictum non curemus, cum quid significet intellegamus.

(*dial.* 6.32-36)

Most notable to an accurate understanding of Augustine's position is that he states that although *some* words can be analysed down to the level of similarity of sound, there are words where even this cannot be achieved and others which have *no* origin.

Innumerabilia sunt enim uerba, quorum origo, de qua ratio reddi possit, aut non est, ut ego arbitror, aut latet, ut Stoici contendunt.

(*dial.* 6.113-116)

⁷⁵ 'non natura, placito et consensione significandi...' (*doctr. chr.* 2.37).

⁷⁶ In this sense the Stoics followed a course similar to that taken in Plato's *Cratylus*, namely that words are phonetic descriptions of items but that they are too obscure to serve any useful purpose.

In this important respect Augustine deviates from the Stoic position. This can perhaps best be explained, as Ruef⁷⁷ states:

Von Augustins *De Dialectica* her und unter systematischem Aspekt lässt sich bloss folgendes sagen: Die [stoische] Theorie der vier etymologischen Prinzipien ist, eigentlich überraschenderweise, konsequent und geschlossen. Sie behauptet keine *natural relationship* (dies gegen Lloyd 1971⁷⁸, S. 62 f.) zwischen Wörtern und Gegenständen, sondern eine Isomorphie zwischen der Struktur des Wortschatzes und der Struktur der Gegenstände der Welt: Auch die *cunabula verborum* sind ja aufgrund einer *similitudo* mit den durch sie bezeichneten Gegenständen verbunden. Eine *θέσει*-Entstehung von Sprache ist damit theoretisch nicht ausgeschlossen.

0111 Indeed one can construct a picture of language development, consistent with Augustine's view of sign formation in humans and with his views on language in general⁷⁹, whereby there is a natural *development* of language (and some of the early 'words' may be imitations of their object⁸⁰) but over time and during this development there are also intentional coinages. Parallel to this, in the *relation of language to the world*, while all uttered words are essentially conventional, there are those words which are natural in the sense that they bear a similarity, in sound, to the object which they refer to; and there are those words which are strictly conventional in that there is no similarity but simply a community has agreed for the words to refer to whatever objects they happen to be chosen to refer to.

0112 It can therefore be concluded that, while there is a degree of 'phonetic' representation in some words, Augustine does not hold this to be true for all words and so uttered words or signs have no inherent relationship with the world⁸¹.

⁷⁷ Ruef: 1981, 136 n.3.6.9.

⁷⁸ Lloyd, in Long: 1971, 58-74.

⁷⁹ v. *inf.* § 8.1.3.

⁸⁰ An early human may plausibly be supposed to attempt to express some such concept as 'wind' to a companion by imitating the wind vocally.

⁸¹ The question as to the relationship of inner words or *dicibilia* to the world will be seen to be very different. This issue will involve an analysis of language and reality influenced by Plato, together with Stoic language theory, and Aristotelian ideas of concept formation. This will be discussed at length below (§ 5).

Augustine is, for this reason, much more interested in the semiotic processes in terms of their evidential nature and is therefore interested in signs as indications.

3.3.2. Indications.

0113 That signs were presented in the rhetorical tradition as indications can be seen by the intellectual and inferential nature of the definition given by Cicero. Cicero stresses that of things probable there are those which are credible, those on which judgement has been given, those which afford an opportunity for comparison, and those which are signs. The context is clearly that of inference and of argumentation, and the sign is forwarded as of the first order of such things.

omne autem... probabile quod sumitur ad argumentationem aut signum est aut credibile aut iudicatum aut comparabile.

(Cicero, *inv.* 1.48)

0114 The sign is defined as that which pertains to the senses and signifies what appears to follow from it⁸².

signum est quod sub sensum aliquem cadit et quiddam significat quod ex ipso profectum uidetur, quod aut ante fuerit aut in ipso negotio aut post sit consecutum...

(Cicero, *inv.* 1.48)

0115 Quintillian defines a σημεῖον as that by which another thing is understood, again suggesting an evidential/inferential relationship.

signum uocatur, ut dixi, σημεῖον, quanquam id quidam uestigium nominauerunt, per quod alia res intelligitur...

(Quintilian, *inst.* 5.9.9)

0116 Signs as defined, and analysed, by Augustine fit into this tradition of evidence and inference. However, there remain two aspects particular to signs that must be

⁸² This definition, which occurs in a sceptical context, fits well with the commemorative sign as accepted by the Pyrrhonian Sceptical School, of which Sextus Empiricus writes, and was an adherent (cf. Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 2.145-158).

considered. Firstly, signs as to their effect, which are described in terms of ‘indicative’ or ‘commemorative’ signs (cf. §2.3): a terminology not employed by Augustine. Secondly, signs as to the cause of signification, which are commonly described under the terms ‘natural’ or ‘conventional’ (cf. §3.3.1): a terminology which is used in an adapted form by Augustine.

3.3.3. Indicative Signs and Commemorative Signs.

0117 The terms of the debate on signs had, to a large degree, been set by Aristotle (*APr.* 2.27.70a3 ff.). Signs were discussed under the terms of deductions and inferences.

0118 Within the limits of signs as evidence the debate turned to the nature of the sign itself. A controversy concerning sign theory which occurred between the Stoics and Epicureans⁸³ was focused on the actual sign itself in that the Stoics held the σημείον to stand for a proposition, or λεκτόν, which describes an observable fact. It is therefore a constituent of an inference in which that which the sign signifies is inferred.

οἱ Στωικοί...φασὶ σημείον εἶναι ἀξίωμα ἐν ὑγιεῖ συνημμένῳ προκαθηγούμενον, ἐκκαλυπτικὸν τοῦ λήγοντος...προκαθηγούμενον δὲ λέγουσι τὸ ἐν συνημμένῳ ἀρχομένῳ ἀπὸ ἀληθοῦς καὶ λήγοντι ἐπὶ ἀληθὲς ἡγούμενον. ἐκκαλυπτικὸν δὲ λήγοντος, ἐπεὶ τὸ “γάλα ἔχει αὕτη” τοῦ “κεκύηκεν αὕτη” δηλωτικὸν εἶναι δοκεῖ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ συνημμένῳ “εἰ γάλα ἔχει αὕτη, κεκύηκεν αὕτη.”⁸⁴
(Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 2.104-6)

That is to say, taking the sign as ϕ in the following *modus ponens* inference, $\phi \sim \psi$ whereby it accords to row (1) of the following truth table:

⁸³ Cf. Philodemus *de signis* and Sextus Empiricus *Πυρρώνειοι ὑποτυπώσεις* and *adversus Mathematicos*.

⁸⁴ Cf. Plato, *Mx.* 237e; Aristotle, *APr.* 2.27.

(D3)

ϕ	ψ	$\phi \sim \psi$
1 T	T	T
2 T	F	F
3 F	T	T
4 F	F	T

0119 In this approach signs are regarded as evident facts which serve to reveal further, non-evident facts which are related as:

- i. the true antecedent (evident)
- ii. the consequent (non-evident)
- iii. in a sound conditional.⁸⁵

Therefore what the sign signifies is inferred by detaching the consequent. ϕ then is the sign and ψ is what it signifies; while the hypothetical proposition must be true otherwise the antecedent cannot be termed a ‘sign’ for it does not in fact signify the consequent. The Stoics held what can be termed an inferential theory of signs; logic was *περὶ σημαίνοντα καὶ σημαίνόμενα* (Diogenes Laertius 7.62) and the sign was clearly defined in propositional terms⁸⁶:

φασὶ σημεῖον εἶναι ἀξίωμα ἐν ὑγιεὶ συννημένῳ καθηγούμενον,
ἐκκαλυπτικὸν τοῦ λήγοντος.
(Sextus Empiricus *M.* 8.245).

0120 This sign relation accords with the Stoic view of reality which “is a deterministic system in which things are connected by rational necessity. Events are logically connected with other events, and *the sign* therefore *analytically entails the*

⁸⁵ It seems that Chrysippus did not understand the conditional as merely truth-functional but as indicating a stronger relationship than this. Cf. *HP* 1, 211: “A weakness of the conditional formulation is that it cannot in itself indicate the truth of the antecedent (cf. row 3 of Table 1); hence, perhaps the post-Chrysippean Stoics preferred to express signs with the ‘subconditional’:
Since p, q.”

⁸⁶ It should be noted that ‘sign’ is here used in a strict sense (v. *inf.* 0127) and implies that the observed conjunctions which do not involve a direct causal relationship are not properly speaking signs (cf. *HP* 1, 265). Such ‘signs’ which do not involve a direct causal relationship were expressed by Chrysippus by negated conjunctions (cf. Cicero, *fat.* 12-15, esp. 14-15).

thing or event signified [my italics].”⁸⁷ For this reason the Stoics felt the necessity for “a conceptual intermediary between the sign and the thing signified in the sign-relation: a sign signifies its object in virtue of a concept which applies to the object signified.”⁸⁸

...οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς στοᾶς, τρία φάμενοι συζυγεῖν ἀλλήλοις, τὸ τε σημαίνόμενον καὶ τὸ σημαῖνον καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον, ὧν σημαῖνον μὲν εἶναι τὴν φωνήν, οἷον τὴν Δίων, σημαίνόμενον δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς δηλούμενον καὶ οὗ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένου διανοίᾳ, οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι οὐκ ἐπαΐουσι καίπερ τῆς φωνῆς ἀκούοντες, τυγχάνον δὲ τὸ ἐκτὸς ὑποκείμενον, ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ὁ Δίων.

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12)

0121 In opposition to this the Epicureans held that a sign is a particular sensible object, something which is directly observed rather than a proposition within an inference. “It is the observed smoke that is the sign of fire, not the proposition expressed by the sentence ‘There is smoke over there’.”⁸⁹

0122 They held that a sign must be what signifies, and although utterances signify propositions, propositions (as intellectual conceptions) do not themselves signify. Therefore, as propositions are signified, but are not signifying, the sign cannot be a proposition. In support of this, they observed that ‘lower’ animals (and illiterates) would appear to be incapable of reasoning by *modus ponens* but are evidently capable of interpreting signs.

0123 This view is superior for framing a general theory of signs inclusive of language. The choice of examples used in classical times and particularly that of the medical symptom as the paradigmatic sign goes a long way to explaining the Stoic position. It would appear, in fact, that it is by way of an inference capable of linguistic

⁸⁷ Markus: 1994, 61. It should be stated that the ‘analytical entailment’ is to be understood in terms of the Stoic analysis of conditionals, not in any analytic sense applicable to modern logic.

⁸⁸ Markus: 1994, 61.

⁸⁹ Clarke: 1987, 14.

formulation that inference is made from such evidence as smoke, a fever, etc., to their past/present causes or future effects. It doesn't require an ability to formulate the rule of *modus ponens* so as to in fact use that rule for evidential reasoning.

0124 The Epicureans, however, opposed the intellectualised character of the sign in Stoic logic and therefore had no conceptual intermediary.

οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Ἐπίκουρον καὶ Στράτωννα τὸν φυσικὸν δύο
μόνον ἀπολείποντες, σημαῖνόν τε καὶ τυγχάνον...
(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.13)

Therefore it can be seen that the Stoics held the sign as fundamentally intellectual, the Epicureans as sensible

Ἐπίκουρος μὲν γὰρ καὶ οἱ προεστῶτες αὐτοῦ τῆς αἰρέσεως
ἔλεξαν αἰσθητὸν εἶναι τὸ σημεῖον, οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς στοᾶς
νοητόν.
(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.177)

0125 For the Epicureans there is not a logical nexus in the relation between sign and thing signified, rather there is a straightforward empirical relationship based on the notion of πρόληψις (Diogenes Laertius 10.33-34). This depends upon an empirical and regular sequence to establish the πρόληψις which enables an inference to be made from sign to signified. Inference can only be valid in that it is verifiable through empirical, observable means.

0126 The Epicurean theory of signs could therefore easily include both an account of language whilst also accounting for such observed phenomena as gestures or animal cries (Lucretius 5.1027-1090). However, to what extent the Stoics meant to provide, through their theory of signs, a theory of language is unclear. Nevertheless, Diogenes Laertius states that the Stoics did, in fact, reduce their theory of language to a branch of logic.

Διαλεκτικὴ δὲ ἐστίν, ὥς φησι Ποσειδώνιος, ἐπιστήμη ἀληθῶν
καὶ ψευδῶν καὶ οὐδετέρων· τυγχάνει δ' αὕτη, ὥς ὁ Χρύσιππος

φησι, περὶ σημαίνοντα καὶ σημαινόμενα. ἐν μὲν οὖν τῇ περὶ
φωνῆς θεωρίᾳ τοιαῦτα λέγεται τοῖς Στοικοῖς
(Diogenes Laertius 7.62)

Their general theory of signs, however, was attacked for its inadequacy in accounting for instinctive and non-discursive response to, and interpretation of, signs. This attack was focused on its exclusively propositional/inferential character (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.269-271)⁹⁰.

0127 Signs *qua* indications could, with profit, be separated into evidence (in a strict sense) and reminders (Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 2.101-102; *M.* 8.152-153). As noted above (§ 2.3), these signs were traditionally classified as ‘indicative’ and ‘commemorative’. Indicative signs (σημεῖον ἐνδεικτικόν) are never observed in conjunction with the object signified (being ‘φύσει ἄδηλον’, and so never observed along with its sign) and, according to Epicureans and Sceptics, cannot function as the basis for an inference (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 2.145-158).

0128 The relationship between signs and inferential reasoning is seen in the conception of ‘indicative’ signs (σημεῖα ἐνδεικτικά), which stand for what is unobservable - for example, sweating as sign of invisible pores in the skin - and the contrasting ‘commemorative’ signs (σημεῖα ὑπομνηστικά).

0129 There is the following pattern:

(D4)

Epicurean:	(semiotic)	object/sign	→	signified
	(linguistic)	utterance	→	thing
Stoic:	(semiotic)	antecedent	→	consequent.

⁹⁰ For the legitimacy of the interpretation of Stoic semiotics by Sextus cf. Allen: 2001, § 3, 147ff. For the purposes of this discussion, what is central, is not the interpretation of Sextus Empiricus, but rather

0130 Commemorative signs stand for what is observable and for which there is a *correlation in past experience* between the sign and what it signifies (such as the observed correlation between smoke and fire) such that on experiencing the sign one is brought to recall what it signifies.

0131 Sextus Empiricus, and other sceptics of the same persuasion, held that only ‘commemorative’ signs were valid as signs, for a sign should be capable of being interpreted in a uniform way by all who observe it (‘indicative’ signs can be interpreted in various ways, with many different hidden causes assigned, for example, by physicians to symptoms where no observable correlation exists).

0132 Whether the distinctions of indicative sign and commemorative sign and the controversy which concerned them was directly known to Augustine is difficult to ascertain. However, in his analysis of signs and in his analysis of language there is clearly an element of both viewpoints in his approach. As the Stoics, he very much supports the fact that there is an intellectual element in the semiotic process, yet he would appear to support a ‘commemorative’ force behind the semiotic process. The fact that Augustine’s treatment of both signs and language is to a large extent influenced by Stoicism is well documented⁹¹, and relevant to his treatment of the effect of signs is that Sextus’ account, and perhaps the Epicurean account also, is less than generous to the actual Stoic theory. For the Stoics accepted signs which were both indicative *and* ones which were commemorative⁹², and indeed to have been interested in weaker semiotic connections than inferential demonstrations⁹³.

Augustine’s approach to signs betrays an awareness of the types of signs involved in

is to bring out the divergent forms of signs *qua* indication so as to more clearly analyse the manner in which Augustine applies (verbal) signs.

⁹¹ Cf. Darrell Jackson (1969), Pinborg (1962), Markus (1957), *et al.*

⁹² That they did not employ the medical terminology of ‘σημείον ένδεικτικόν’ and ‘σημείον ύπομνηστικόν’ cf. Burnyeat, in Barnes *et al.*: 1982, 222.

⁹³ Cf. Allen: 2001, 158ff.

the controversy as described by Sextus, but, as will be shown, Augustine, as the Stoics, is interested in signs in a broader way than the indicative/commemorative analysis allows.

0133 In the DM Augustine's approach to the nature of linguistic signs depends not only on the effect that the signs have on the sign-receiver, that is whether they indicate or remind, but also depends on the question of causality. This is to say, if X is a sign of Y, then this can be reformulated in such a way that, if X is a sign of Y depends upon whether Y can be used so as to explain X⁹⁴: whether <smoke> is a sign of <fire> depends upon whether <fire> can be used to explain <smoke>. Also, how this information is understood, and what type of sign it provides to the sign-receiver depends on the causal relation from Y to X and the manner in which the receiver understands it.

3.3.4. Signa Naturalia and Signa Data.

0134 In the DDC, when discussing signs *qua* signs, Augustine presents two main classifications of signs, 'natural' signs and 'given' signs.

signorum igitur alia sunt naturalia, alia data. naturalia sunt quae sine uoluntate atque ullo appetitu significandi praeter se aliquid aliud ex se cognosci faciunt...data uero signa sunt quae sibi quaeque uiuentia inuicem dant ad demonstrandos quantum possunt motus animi sui uel sensa aut intellecta quaelibet.

(*doctr. chr.* 2.2-3)

Augustine is drawing a distinction, based on the presence of the will ("*ad demonstrandos...nisi ad depromendum et traiciendum*") or lack of its presence ("*sine uoluntate atque ullo appetitu*"), in which a distinction is also implicit which is very

⁹⁴ This is not intended to imply that there can only be a sign where there is a causal relation, for it is possible that X and Y each occur only and always when Z, which is their cause, and that X could be

similar to that distinction of types of ‘meaning’ found in Grice⁹⁵. In Augustine the focus of the distinction is not so much one of necessary relationships but rather one of purposive intention. To this extent it would then seem valid to understand Augustine’s *significans* as having a sense close to *meaning*⁹⁶.

0135 *Signa naturalia* have meaning in that they are part of a causal nexus such that, when accurately interpreted, ϕ necessarily means ψ , such as ‘smoke means fire’; while *signa data* have meaning, and are classified as ‘given’ signs, only in the sense that some person A intends ϕ to mean ψ and that this is understood by some other person B, so that ϕ means ψ for both A and B, such as “[dog] means <dog>”. In *signa naturalia* there is a causal relation such that the ϕ means ψ without there being any intent on the part of the sign-giver, while in *signa data* (although there may be a necessary causal relation also in play) the causal relation depends precisely upon the sign-giver intending to signify. There need be no natural causality involved in such signs, what particularises these types of sign is that they are intended to function as signs. The most obvious example of this type of sign is the word.

0136 Although the role of persons A and B are necessary to any meaningful exchange in the example of *signa data*, there must also be a sentient sign interpreter within the semiotic event classified under *signa naturalia*. There need not be any purposive signalling but there must necessarily be an interpreter.

D2 *signum est enim res praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire.*
(doctr. chr. 2.1)

inferred from the occurrence of Y, and *vice versa*, although neither is the cause of the other. Such signs are not strictly relevant to Augustine’s approach to linguistic signs and will not be elaborated upon.

⁹⁵ Namely, a distinction between ‘meaning’ in that “[dog] means <dog>” and in that “spots mean measles”; the first is a representational connection, in the sense that [dog] ‘stands for’ <dog>, while the second is a, natural, causal connection. Grice: 1957, 377-388.

⁹⁶ That is to say, having the sense of ‘represent’ *qua* ‘standing for’, or ‘evince’, depending on context and usage.

0137 In Augustine's classification of signs there is observed the distinction between sign-giver and sign-receiver. It would appear that there is an added distinction of *signa naturalia* and *signa data* "according to whether the relation of dependence is between the sign and the object, or between the sign and the subject."⁹⁷ These sign relationships can be classified as follows (taking subject as sign-giver and object as sign-receiver): (1) the *signa naturalia* relate to natural/necessary causal relations, such that there is a cause and effect which is observed by a receiver who then, by participating in interpretation, completes the triad⁹⁸ necessary for the sign system to exist. The sign-receiver interprets the causal nexus from effect to cause and thus creates the semiotic triad: for example, a person interprets smoke (effect) as signifying fire (cause). There is no intention on the part of the subject to signify but the object (receiver) interprets the subject (effect) as signifying the signified (cause).

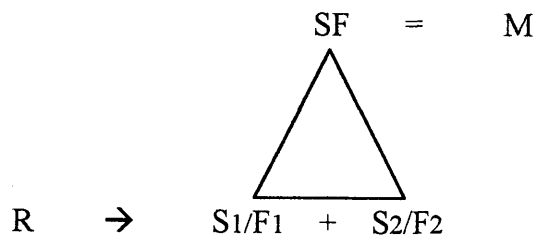
0138 There is no question of the sign-receiver giving the sign its *significance* in this semiotic relationship. Taking the above example of smoke and fire, the receiver (R) observes, for the first time, smoke (S1) and then sees that the smoke is coming from fire (F1). On a second occasion (R) observes, for a second time, smoke (S2) and then sees once again that (S2) is coming from fire (F2) and therefore becomes aware of the more general causal model (SF) such that, on encountering (S3), (R) can apply (SF) and interpret (S3) as *meaning* (F3). As (R) recognises the causal nexus (SF) so too does the *meaning* (M) of smoke (S) occur for (R). The process is represented in the following diagram⁹⁹.

⁹⁷ Markus: 1994, 72

⁹⁸ (1) sign; (2) interpreter; (3) signified.

⁹⁹ Cf. Eco: 1979, 23.

(D5)



As is seen, the significance of the above semiotic relationship arises from (R) observing and becoming aware of the causal nexus (SF)¹⁰⁰. So in a semiotic analysis:

$$(S) + (R) = (M/SF).$$

0139 The necessary addition to the relationship is a sign-receiver who interprets the sign as signifying what is signified. That is to say, the *signa naturalia* are such due to the fact that the subject plays no intentional role in the process while it is the object, or sign-receiver, who completes the triad through interpretation of the sign *qua* sign.

0140 While (2), the *signa data* are defined precisely in the reverse of this for it is the subject who intentionally sets forth the sign *qua* sign. The active role, semiotically speaking, is played by a purposeful subject, while in *signa naturalia* it is the object which plays the active role in making the situation a semiotically pregnant one.

However, "... all that Augustine says here [in the opening of DDC 2] is that *signa data* depend upon the will of the sign-giver for their *occurrence*, not for their *meaning*."¹⁰¹

0141 In sum, *signa naturalia* occur naturally and unintentionally cause their sign-receiver to think of something beyond themselves; while *signa data* are produced so as to intentionally cause their sign-receiver to think of something beyond themselves.

¹⁰⁰ The receiver, through observation of natural relations, inductively makes an inference and so grasps a meaning.

¹⁰¹ Darrell Jackson: 1972, 97

0142 The purpose of giving (given) signs is equivalent to the definition arrived at in the opening section of the DM¹⁰²:

sic quoque locutione nihil aliud agere quam commemorare, cum memoria, cui uerba inhaerent, ea reuoluendo facit uenire in mentem res ipsas, quarum signa sunt uerba.

(2)

nec ulla causa est nobis significandi id est signi dandi nisi ad depromendum et traiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit qui signum dat.
(doctr. chr. 2.3)

0143 Of particular importance is that *signa data* are not necessarily conventional in the sense traditionally applied to language. Those signs produced with communicative intent may not be conventional (in that they do not necessarily conform to a rule established within a linguistic community). A gesture made in a foreign community so as to communicate one's intention would seem to be a *signum datum* as defined here - but it may not be equivalent to a conventional sign. Such a gesture may fail to communicate because it does not conform to any conventional rule within the foreign community, but is nevertheless 'given' in that the sign giver intends the sign to communicate her intention.

0144 In a later passage of the DDC, *signa data* are characterised as not given by nature but '*placito et consensione significandi*'.

sicut enim uerbi gratia una figura litterae, quae decusatim notatur, aliud apud Graecos, aliud apud Latinos ualet, non natura, sed placito et consensione significandi, et ideo qui utramque linguam nouit, si homini Graeco uelit aliquid significare scribendo, non in ea significatione ponit hanc litteram, in qua eam ponit, cum homini scribit Latino; et beta uno eodemque sono apud Graecos litterae, apud Latinos holeris nomen est; et cum dico lege, in his duabus syllabis aliud Graecus, aliud Latinus intellegit sicut ergo hae omnes significationes pro suae cuiusque societatis consensione animos mouent et, quia diuersa consensio est, diuerse mouent, nec ideo consenserunt in eas

¹⁰² Although the perspective of the DM passage is from that of how words function when one speaks to oneself, nevertheless the basic point is the same.

homines, quia iam ualebant ad significationem, sed ideo ualent, quia consenserunt in eas, sic etiam illa signa, quibus perniciosa daemonum societas comparatur, pro cuiusque obseruationibus ualent.
(doctr. chr. 2.24.)

This characterises conventional signs but is not necessarily intended to define all *signa data* as conventional, on the contrary the context focuses upon *verbal* utterances.

0145 Conventional signs are clearly *signa data* and arise due to intention. However, this does not mean that there is a straightforward relation between these classes of signs, as there is a willed aspect “with respect to both the occurrence and the significance of signs.

	Not willed	Willed
1) Occurrence	<i>naturalia</i>	<i>data</i>
	(doctr. chr. 2.1.)	
2) Significance	<i>natura</i>	<i>placito et consensione</i>
	(Doctr. chr. 2.24.)” ¹⁰³	

The will is active in both ‘given’ and ‘conventional’ signs but to different ends (occurrence and significance respectively).

0146 It can therefore be said that what makes ‘given’ signs signs is not any inherent causal connectedness with the signified but rather the purposive giving of the item as a sign. To this end a ‘given’ sign need not necessarily be explained by its *significatum*, as was seen for natural signs with fire (*significatum*) being the explanation of smoke (sign).

0147 Words fall into the category of ‘given’ signs and although their occurrence is not natural it will be fruitful to consider the nature of their significance in terms of its explanatory cause.

3.4. Words and Things.

0148 It is now possible to return to the DM and to consider both what Augustine's analysis reveals about linguistic signs *per se* and what it reveals about how these linguistic signs function in terms of the acquisition of knowledge.

0149 From the opening two sections of the DM, and from the general consideration of signs, it can be seen that words are signs (*uerba signa esse*, DM 3), and that a sign is an item used to signify something (*signum... aliquid significet...*, DM 3). In addition Augustine proposes the thesis that in any passage of speech every word is a sign and so every word signifies something.

*Aug. quot uerba sunt in hoc uersu: «si nihil ex tanta superis placet urbe relinqui»?*¹⁰⁴

*Ad. octo*¹⁰⁵.

Aug. octo ergo signa sunt.

Ad. ita est.

Aug. credo te hunc uersum intellegere.

Ad. satis arbitror.

Aug. dic mihi, quid singula uerba significant.

(3)

If there are eight words in the verse there are therefore eight signs, and as all signs signify something, there are, at least, eight 'things' which the words signify. It should be noticed that, in addition, it is important that the listener must understand¹⁰⁶ (*credo te hunc uersum intellegere*), that is to say that although the verse may be meaningful, it is not necessarily meaningful to everyone.

¹⁰³ Darrell Jackson: 1972, 98.

¹⁰⁴ Vergil, *Aeneid* 2.659.

¹⁰⁵ The fact that the position taken is that there are eight and not nine signs suggests that Augustine does not hold with the Stoic view that both propositions and their parts (i.e. individual words) are signs. Rist may be correct in arguing that Augustine is here following a Porphyrian model where '... the proposition as a whole functions in such a way as to clarify and reinforce the meaning of the subject-term' (Rist: 1994, 26; cf. also, 314-316).

¹⁰⁶ "[Signs]... constitute an utterance in a language just in case some person or other, if he were now living and were to be presented with the [signs], would recognise them as constituting an utterance in his language" Harrison: 1979, 4.

0150 The picture presented in this passage appears to be one in which language consists of sentences constructed out of strings of words which can each be singly signified, or defined, and understood separately from the context of the sentence within which they are set. This tends to suggest the ‘picture theory’ of language criticised by Wittgenstein (*PI*, § 1), supposedly, seen in Augustine’s view of language acquisition (*conf.* 1.8)¹⁰⁷.

[This] give[s] us a particular picture of the essence of human language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects - sentences are combinations of such names. - In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the world. It is the object for which it stands.

Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of words. If you describe the learning of language in this way you are, I believe, thinking primarily of nouns like “table”, “chair”, “bread”, and of people’s names, and only secondarily of the names of certain actions and properties; and of the remaining kinds of words as something that will take care of itself.

(Wittgenstein, *PI* § 1)¹⁰⁸

The broader implications of Wittgenstein’s critique of Augustine’s view of language acquisition as presented in the *Confessiones* is highlighted in a later passage of the *Philosophical Investigations* in that Augustine’s model suggests that the child who is acquiring a language in fact already possesses one.

...Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already *think*, only not yet speak. And “think” would here mean something like “talk to itself”.

(Wittgenstein, *PI* § 32)

This is to say, in Augustine’s model there is a reliance by the child on complex concepts such as ‘naming’ and ‘signifying’: “[I]n Augustine’s account the child’s mastery of certain basic concepts is presupposed” (Charles: 2003, 104). This

¹⁰⁷ Language acquisition (and this criticism by Wittgenstein) will be discussed below (cf. § 4, 7, and 8).

¹⁰⁸ Wittgenstein clearly has his own agenda in using the Augustine passage but the section cited from the *Confessiones* is only one section from a wider context, and, more importantly, Augustine is not presenting a fully justified and defended description of a theory of language acquisition. To properly

presupposition points to another position presupposed by Augustine, one which pervades the account given in the DM, namely that in acquiring a language a child already has direct access to, what Charles (2003, 104) has called, ‘basic realist-sounding notions’. In an approach such as Augustine’s “...the world (and its objects) is fixed independently of us and puts its imprint on any language we are able to use to describe it. Thus the structure of the world determines the concepts we possess, the meanings of our linguistic expressions. Further, our linguistic expressions are correctly used when and only when they reflect (or represent) independent reality. The truth of our sentences depends solely on how the world is. It is not determined by, or dependent on, our means for establishing or ratifying how the world is. This is why, for the Augustinian realist, our indicative sentences possess (what I shall call) realist, or ratification-independent, truth-conditions. They can possess truth-conditions of this sort because the meaning of the linguistic expressions they contain is determined by how the world is” (Charles: 2003, 104). In the Augustinian model it appears that the child already has a mastery of those very concepts whose apprehension requires to be explained. There is an assumption that concepts and word meanings are determined by how the world is, and how this can be so is in fact the very thing which needs to be explained. It is necessary to explain how word meanings are established and are able to be understood.

0151 Wittgenstein gives a penetrating analysis of the dangers of such an approach to language¹⁰⁹ and the extent to which Augustine conforms with, and deviates from, this approach will cast much light upon his view of language. The answers to many of the problems raised by Wittgenstein will need to be considered in due course throughout this discussion but what is of relevance here, and what should immediately raise

understand the view given in the *Confessiones* one must fill in the gaps, as it were, from other sources of analysis, notably the DM (v. *inf.* § 8.1.3).

doubts over how far Augustine follows such an approach to language is that he specifically focuses on the kind of words that should be left to ‘take care of themselves.’

0152 *All* words signify something, even conjunctions (*si*) and prepositions (*ex*), and from this it is argued (*v. inf.* § 5) that consequently all words are names (in that they all apparently refer to something. This simplistic referential theory is progressively undermined in Augustine’s and Adeodatus’ subsequent enquiries (*v. inf.* § 5).

0153 In asserting that every word signifies something Augustine is participating in a controversy which existed between the Stoics, who held that every word signifies something¹¹⁰, and the Peripatetics, who held that this is only true for nouns and verbs, other words being co-significant (i.e. not significant in their own right)¹¹¹. Augustine would appear to align himself with the Stoic position. This need not lead to the position envisioned by Wittgenstein, for the difficulties Adeodatus encounters in defining the words (‘*si*’ and ‘*nihil*’, and later ‘*ex*’) is caused by a methodological error (i.e. of considering words in isolation) not necessarily an ontological one. Augustine takes a line from Vergil and employs the common school method in rhetorical instruction of taking each word in turn and discussing it¹¹², and through this methodological error the discussion comes to an apparent impasse. While later Augustine employs Stoic methods of linguistic analysis (*v. inf.* § 5.6.2 ff.) to demonstrate the significance of words without necessitating that they denote in any ‘simplistic’ way such as the term [chair] might be said to denote or refer to a chair¹¹³.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. also Wittgenstein: *BB*, p.77.

¹¹⁰ The Stoic position, and Peripatetic as far as is relevant, will be important later in the dialogue and will be properly discussed in due course (*v. inf.* § 5).

¹¹¹ Cf. Aristotle, *int.* 20a13. Also, certain terms are not significant at all, *po.* 1456b38 ff.

¹¹² It is of note that Augustine is, in the DM, criticising the education system and those who profess to teach.

¹¹³ It will be shown to be doubtful whether any words can be said to denote in this way in Augustine’s approach to language, for any reference in Augustinian terms is at the least ‘indirect’ (*v. inf.* § 5).

0154 While it is reasonable, and acceptable, that words are signs and in this sense are representative (in the Gricean sense, v. *sup.* 0134)¹¹⁴, it can clearly be seen that if all words are significant and so represent or stand for something then how one is to understand this ‘something’ is crucial. If one is not to arrive at the seemingly impossible position where words such as [if] refer to objects, <if>, then a clearer description of the semiotic process and of the item signified is necessary.

3.4.1. Si: Mind-Dependent Objects.

0155 With regard to the first word (*si*) of the verse it is clear that words can refer to things which are, in some sense, mind-dependent or specifically intelligible.

Adeodatus claims to be able to ‘see’ what *si* signifies but to be unable to explain it by means of language.

Ad. uideo quidem, quid significet si, sed nullum aliud uerbum, quo id exponi possit, inuenio.
Aug. saltem illud inuenis, quicquid significatur hoc uerbo, ubinam sit.
Ad. uidetur mihi, quod dubitationem significet; iam dubitatio ubi nisi in animo est?
Aug. accipio interim; persequere cetera.
 (3)

That words may be clearly significant and yet difficult to determine in terms of their reference is an important observation for the following dialogue. Also of note is that the answer given by Adeodatus is only provisionally (*interim*) accepted.

¹¹⁴ Words *qua signa data* are representative in a conventional manner (v. *sup.* 0145), in that they are agreed by a community to ‘stand for ‘something’’. Yet the question as to what they represent and how

3.4.2. *Nihil*: Words without Referents.

0156 Signs must signify something (DM 3) and yet it is clear that ‘*nihil*’ is a word which has significance. The question depends upon what one means by ‘something’¹¹⁵. It would seem from the treatment of ‘*si*’ (0155) that words can refer to a state of mind, such as ‘doubt’, but how this relates to ‘things’ such as ‘nothing’ is problematic. If ‘*nihil*’ has significance, which it clearly does, then it must, according to the position held in the dialogue, signify something and therefore nothing must be something.

Ad. nihil quid aliud significat, nisi id quod non est?

Aug. uerum fortasse dicis, sed reuocat me ab assentiendo, quod superius concessisti non esse signum, nisi aliquid significet; quod autem non est, nullo modo esse aliquid potest. quare secundum uerbum in hoc uersu non est signum, quia non significat aliquid, et falso inter nos constitit, quod omnia uerba signa sint aut omne signum aliquid significet.

Ad. nimis quidem urges, sed quando non habemus quid significemus, omnino stulte uerbum aliquod promimus; tu autem nunc mecum loquendo credo quod nullum sonum frustra emittis, sed omnibus, quae ore tuo erumpunt, signum mihi das, ut aliquid intellegam. quapropter non te oportet istas duas syllabas enuntiare dum loqueris, si per eas non significas quicquam. si autem uides necessariam per eas enuntiationem fieri nosque doceri uel commoneri, cum auribus insonant, uides etiam profecto, quid uelim dicere, sed explicare non possim.

(3)

Augustine himself hints by way of a joke, at an important distinction both for the resolution of this seeming impasse and for the following discussion in general, namely that there is a difference between a word *qua* word and a word as a meaningful item. In modern terminology, the distinction between use and mention¹¹⁶.

exactly this occurs, semiotically speaking, will be central to answering the above question.

¹¹⁵ As discussed above (0087-0090) something may be a thing in the weak sense that it is not-nothing. How terms such as ‘*nihil*’ fit into the definition of *res* as most fully given in DD 5.2-3 (R3, 0087) will be discussed in due course (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6).

¹¹⁶ The discussion of this is extremely interesting in its own right and significant in terms of the dialogue as a whole (v. *inf.* § 5.6.2.5 and § 6).

Aug. quid igitur facimus? an affectionem animi quandam, cum rem non uidet et tamen non esse inuenit aut inuenisse se putat, hoc uerbo significari dicimus potius quam rem ipsam quae nulla est?

Ad. istuc ipsum est fortasse, quod expedire moliebar.

Aug. transeamus ergo hinc, quoquo modo se habet, ne res absurdissima nobis accadat.

Ad. quae tandem?

Aug. si nihil nos teneat et moras patiamur.

Ad. ridiculum hoc quidem est et nescio quo tamen modo uideo posse contingere, immo plane uideo contigisse.

(3)

0157 The provisional suggestion is that the word refers to a certain ‘affection’ of the mind¹¹⁷. The use of the word ‘*affectio*’ is problematic¹¹⁸, yet it is clear that the solution to this issue may be resolved by consideration of the nature of the signification process and the nature of those things which are signified and their relation to the mind (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6).

3.4.2.1. *Affectio animi.*

0158 ‘*Affectio*’ is the usual term for emotions (cf. *civ.* 9.4¹¹⁹), which would suggest some degree of passivity, however, it is contrary to Augustine’s analyses of mental events that they be in any way passive. However, these affections¹²⁰ are always seen by Augustine as involving an act of one’s will (*conf.* 1.13; *civ.* 14.6) and are taken to be *affectiones* due to their being a motion¹²¹ of the soul adverse to that of reason. Therefore, these motions are caused by irrational disturbances, in terms of their motions, rather than passive in the sense of unintentional.

¹¹⁷ The nature of perception affecting the mind and causing concept formation is in large part Aristotelian, in terms of the practicalities of the process, while being Platonic, in ontological terms.

¹¹⁸ The Aristotelian background for words referring to affections of the mind will be discussed in due course (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.4).

¹¹⁹ In this passage ‘*affectio*’ is the direct translation of the Greek ‘πάθος’ and refers to ‘motions of the soul’.

¹²⁰ For a fuller discussion cf. O’Daly: 1987, 46-54.

¹²¹ On ‘motion’ in the soul in general cf. O’Daly: 1987, § 2.

0159 ‘*affectio*’ is generally used with reference to emotions but in DM 3 it does seem to involve reasoning. This can be seen in *de animae quantitate* where the context involves thinking about a circle.

Aug. ...si circulus non magnitudine spatii, sed quadam conformatione ceteris praestat, quanto magis de uirtute existimandum est, quod non maioris loci occupatione, sed diuina quadam congruentia rationum atque concordia ceteras adfectiones animi superat?

(*an. quant. 27*)

This passage clearly involves reasoning and does not, as the DM passage, involve the emotions. However, in the *de animae quantitate* passage what is perhaps notable is that what is of importance about the circle is that it is somehow *more* in accord with reason than other affections. In this sense ‘*adfectiones*’ are rational ‘states of soul’ rather than emotions, and what is stressed by the use of this term is not that the mental events are irrational disturbances but that they are *less* in rational accord than thought about the circle - the most perfect of shapes (*an. quant. 27*).

0160 As for the DM passage, it describes a state of soul or the disposition it attains when it *does not see* a thing (*cum rem non uidet*) and *finds* (*inuenit*) or *thinks* that it has found (*inuenisse se putat*) what is not (*non esse*). There would seem to be a parallel with the passage in the *de animae quantitate* in that the mind encounters what is contrary to the rational processes in that the mind (*animus*), rather than ‘seeing’ something as is normal in rational processes, actually does *not* see something. Like the other shapes in the *de animae quantitate* which are less rational so too is the thinking of what is not, for what is not can only be thought of in terms of the reverse of what is.

3.5. Words Defined with Words: Regress.

0161 In the attempt by Adeodatus to define words from the line of verse it becomes clear that the use of words to describe other words gets one no closer to the actual thing itself which is being signified. This point is considered after Adeodatus' explaining 'ex' by 'de', with Augustine stating a desire to get at the thing itself which is signified by a word, or words.

*Ad. tertia praepositio est ex, pro qua de possumus, ut arbitror, dicere.
Aug. non id quaero, ut pro una uoce notissima aliam uocem aeque
notissimam, quae idem significet, dicas, si tamen idem significat; sed interim
concedamus ita esse. certe si poeta iste non ex tanta urbe, sed de tanta
dixisset, quaereremque abs te, quid de significaret, diceres ex, cum haec duo
uerba essent, id est signa unum aliquid, ut tu putas, significantia. ego autem id
ipsum nescio quid unum, quod his duobus signis significatur, inquiero.*

(4)

0162 Yet even when Adeodatus expands his explanation by way of phrases which demonstrate what 'ex' signifies, this is deemed unsatisfactory for again the process involves words which are used to describe other words. There is therefore an infinite regress in that one gets no closer to the thing itself¹²². The Platonic and Aristotelian use of definition may appear a solution, of sorts, to this problem. However, Augustine states later in the dialogue that he has doubts about the method of definition.

...aduersus disciplinam definiendi multa disputata sunt...

(43)

0163 One of the reasons for the doubts over definition, and the reason that the disciple of definition is not applied here is that it falls foul of the same problems as individual words. For in the DD, although he does not get to actually discussing definitions as promised, there is nevertheless the suggestion, when taken with the issue raised concerning the infinite regression caused by the attempt to define words,

¹²² Cf. The regress and ultimate *aporia* reached in Plato's *Theaetetus* 202c-208b.

that words are the words used in definitions lead to the necessity for further definitions, and so on with these definitions of definitions.

haec omnia quae definita sunt, utrum recte definita sint et utrum hactenus uerba definitionis aliis definitionibus persequenda fuerint, ille indicabit locus, quo definiendi disciplina tractatur.
(dial.5.12-16)

0164 Augustine is, in this passage, thinking of sentences as consisting of strings of words which are discrete units and make up the basic, independent¹²³, units of meaning. Even with the placing of ‘ex’ into some sort of context, it is felt inadequate for revealing its significance. In this sense, the defining of a word by giving an example of its use gets one no nearer an understanding of the term¹²⁴. Augustine clearly sees words as each referring to or correlated to some discrete thing which is signified by the word.

Ad. mihi uidetur secretionem quandam significare ab ea re, in qua fuerat aliquid, quod ex illa esse dicitur, siue illa non maneat, ut in hoc uersu non manente urbe poterant aliqui ex illa esse Troiani, siue maneat, sicut ex urbe Roma dicimus esse negotiatores in Africa.
Aug. ut concedam tibi haec ita esse nec enumerem, quam multa fortasse praeter hanc tuam regulam reperiantur, illud certe tibi adtendere facile est exposuisse te uerbis uerba, id est signis signa eisdemque notissimis notissima. ego autem illa ipsa, quorum haec signa sunt, mihi si posses uellem ut ostenderes.

(4)

0165 Two themes of note which are raised in this passage are the question as to whether different words even signify the same thing, which leads directly into the analysis of linguistic signs (classification of signs; v. *inf.* § 5); and the arrival at an apparently aporetic position which signals with the final word a possible solution, namely ostensive definition (*ostenderes*).

¹²³ These are not memes, in that they are independently meaningful.

¹²⁴ In this sense it is rather like the common error made in the Socratic Dialogues of Plato, where instead of defining *x* the interlocutor simply gives an example of it.

3.5.1. The Dilemma of Linguistic Communication.

0166 The statement of the dilemma of linguistic communication hinges on the proposal that words are described by words, which are in turn described by words, *ad infinitum*, without ever directly revealing the thing which they signify¹²⁵.

Ad. miror te nescire uel potius simulare nescientem responsione mea fieri quod uis omnino non posse, siquidem sermocinamur, ubi non possumus respondere nisi uerbis. tu autem res quaeris eas quae, quodlibet sint, uerba certe non sunt, quas tamen ex me tu quoque uerbis quaeris. prior itaque tu sine uerbis quaere, ut ego deinde ista condicione respondeam.

(5)

The implication is that one cannot use words to determine what the things are which words in fact signify. The purpose of speech is to teach, and speech consists of strings of words which (as signs) each signify something, but words themselves do not appear to be able to adequately determine what it is that words signify. The dilemma is, therefore, that while the purpose of language is to teach, words themselves are unable to teach what it is that they allegedly teach. In addition to this is the wider implication which will be more fully introduced when there is a rather more explicit reference to the Paradox of Enquiry, from Plato's *Meno* (v. inf. 8.1.1.), that one either knows something or one does not. The ability of words to move one closer to an understanding of any item is implicitly undermined by Augustine's analysis of the dilemma of linguistic communication. Augustine's approach to this question is centred on an analysis of language and as such is closer to the approach introduced by Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (v. inf. 0150) than it is to that taken by Plato. These broader implications will be progressively revealed over the course of the dialogue and an attempt at a solution will be the culmination of the argument of the DM.

0167 With this, the opening section of the DM is completed and the issues under consideration are set forth. The initial attempt to analyse the value of words in an attempt to acquire knowledge, by means of telling has foundered in that they cannot even tell what it is that they signify but rather simply do so. A second attempt is now attempted where it is attempted to show what words signify.

¹²⁵ In this Adeodatus touches upon a future theme, namely, that words are the only things that can be shown by words *via* demonstration.

4. Ostensive Definition.

0168 For language to be involved in the acquisition of knowledge it must at some point be put into some sort of relationship with the world. Words, it would seem, must be explained not through other words but by reference to the reality they are supposed to give information about. That is to say, at least some words should be able to be defined by showing or indicating those items for which they stand. It is at just such a point that Augustine introduces the notion of ostensive definition¹²⁶.

0169 The dilemma arrived at above (0167) basically hinges upon the need to connect the meanings of words with the reality they, in some sense, refer to and to break out of the linguistic regress caused by the attempt to explain words by reference to other words. Augustine's introduction of ostension¹²⁷, at the least, implies the view that once a core of ostensively acquired terms is available then additional terms may then be explained discursively, that is, through the use of the available terms in complexes which can be used to determine other non-core terms (i.e. ones not able to

¹²⁶ Ostension appears first, in a philosophically interesting sense, with reference to Cratylus who apparently was led by his extreme Heracliteanism (for a discussion of this as presented by Plato and Aristotle cf. Kirk: 1951. The conclusions reached by Kirk concerning the purpose of his 'pointing' - pp. 243-4 - are questionable.) to hold that language was insufficient for accurate communication and that he took to supplementing it with gestures, specifically, pointing (Aristotle, *metaph.* 1010a7; *rh.* 1417b1). The passage in the *Metaphysics* suggests that Cratylus was reduced to only (μόνον) pointing, yet taken together with the passage in the *Rhetoric* the more plausible interpretation would be that theoretically one should only point but that in practice Cratylus used both words and ostension. That Cratylus took to pointing, taken together with a Heracliteanism where all things are in flux (Plato, *Crat.* 402a; Aristotle, *metaph.* 1010a7-15; DK 43: B12; 44: B49a; 45: B91.), would appear to suggest a form of direct reference where what is ostended is 'that thing there now'. Cratylus would appear to hold that what is defined when pointing at a rabbit would be something like the Quinean 'rabbit stage' (cf. Quine: 1960, § 12; 1969, 30ff.), that is to say when pointing one defines a temporal stage of a rabbit and, in the next instant, another temporal stage of a rabbit is present. Other than Cratylus (and the evidence for his intention is controversial) there is little evidence for a philosophically sophisticated theory involving ostension, yet of interest for possible influences upon Augustine is the commonplace of pointing out what some term signifies taken together with the Platonic notion that knowledge involves direct 'visual' contact with something. Also, there is evidence for the idea of words functioning so as to 'show' something in Plato (*Crat.* 394e and *passim*) and so as to 'point' in Plotinus (6.4). There is also the possibility of a Stoic influence on Augustine's approach to these issues (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6). That said, it is difficult to find any more specific influence on Augustine in this regard and so it is possible that much of what Augustine has to say on ostension is original.

be ostensively defined)¹²⁸. That this is the basic position held by Augustine will be seen in reference to his theory of language acquisition (v. *inf.* § 8.1.3). However, as will become clear, that language acquisition depends to a degree upon ostensive definition and that terms which cannot be ostensively defined may be determined via ones which can, does not necessitate that knowledge is acquired via language.

4.1. Ostension (1).

0170 Augustine introduces ostensive definition as a definition which proceeds by simply showing what the word in question stands for or refers to.

Aug. iure agis fateor, sed si quaererem, tres istae syllabae quid significant, cum dicitur paries, nonne posses digito ostendere, ut ego prorsus rem ipsam uiderem, cuius signum est hoc trisyllabum uerbum demonstrante te nulla tamen uerba referente?

(5)

This passage reveals that Augustine is not concerned with the, related, problem of language acquisition but specifically with the meanings of words and how these can be revealed. To this end Augustine has no problem introducing the fact that the person to whom the term is being defined can ask what a particular word means or signifies, and be understood when doing so: he is specifically concerned with the application of ostensive definition rather than with ostensive teaching¹²⁹. There is therefore a shared language and the major problem inherent in language acquisition, namely that of a starting point for the learner to begin from which does not imply a background

¹²⁷ Augustine first refers to ostensive definition in the *de ordine* (2.18).

¹²⁸ Cf. Quine: 1950, 631.

¹²⁹ Cf. Wittgenstein: 'I do not want to call this "ostensive definition", because the child [being taught a first language] cannot as yet *ask* what the name is. I will call it "ostensive teaching of words".' (*PI* 1.6)

language¹³⁰, is not immediately apparent, although it will soon become so for this issue is central to both ostensive definition¹³¹ and to Augustine's wider concern of the involvement of language in knowledge acquisition.

0171 In addition to the very general idea of ostensive definition in the passage above (0170) there are also a number of more specific factors introduced in the same passage. The object which is defined is a particular physical object, namely a wall (*paries*) which can be seen and the ostension involves pointing at the definiendum (*digito ostendere*). There is implicitly a general sense of ostension which involves showing in a broad sense (*demonstrante*) and a more specific sense which involves pointing (*digito ostendere*). This distinction will be seen to be important in Augustine's analysis, and will also be seen to move away from modern approaches to ostension¹³² in a manner which reveals Augustine's attempt at a solution to what has been referred to by Quine as 'referential inscrutability' and the related idea of the 'indeterminacy of translation'¹³³ - both of these issues (in ways both differing and similar to those of Quine) are at the heart of much of the following discussion of the DM.

¹³⁰ Cf. Wittgenstein: 'Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one.' (*PI* 1.32).

¹³¹ Cf. "[Direct and deferred ostension each has its] own set of problems...neither can fix the reference of terms of divided reference...To interpret these terms, what we do in practice is assume...the ontology of some background language" Welch: 1984, 263.

¹³² Primarily Wittgenstein and Quine.

¹³³ On encountering a foreign language there is an indeterminacy of translation for all but a few sentences. This is demonstrated by reference to the case of 'Gavagai' where one may equate this foreign (one word) sentence with 'Rabbit'; 'Temporal stage of a rabbit'; 'Undetached rabbit part'; 'Rabbit' as a general term; etc. (cf. Quine: 1960, 51-57). "My remarks on indeterminacy began as a challenge to likeness of meaning... Certainly likeness of meaning is a dim notion... Of two predicates which are alike in extension, it has never been clear when to say that they are alike in meaning and when not... Reference, extension, has been the firm thing; meaning, intension, the infirm. The indeterminacy of translation now confronting us [with 'Gavagai'], however, cuts across extension and intension alike. The terms 'rabbit', 'undetached rabbit part', and 'rabbit stage' differ not only in meaning; they are true of different things. Reference itself proves behaviourally inscrutable" Quine: 1969, 35.

0172 The specific picture given in the above passage (0170) is one whereby a person asks ‘What does [x] signify/mean?’. In this sense Augustine is following on from the discussions of Plato and his concern with Forms in his interrelated, and often confused (or perhaps, confusing), epistemological, semantical, and metaphysical considerations¹³⁴. Augustine’s concern is epistemological but it quickly becomes concerned with the issue of semantics, and these, apparently, related themes will be gradually distinguished by the over-arching discussion of ‘telling’ and ‘showing’. Due to the fact that Augustine is primarily concerned with epistemological questions, he has a tendency to avoid, often frustratingly so, the wider metaphysical implications of the discussion in the DM. However, for any clear understanding of the dialogue (and of the theory of language implicit in it) the metaphysical concerns will need to be considered.

0173 In answer to the question ‘What does [x] mean/signify?’ the person points with their finger to the actual, physical, object signified by the term [x] (namely, a wall). This description of ostensive definition comes close to that given by Quine (1969, 39) for *direct ostension*.

First let me define direct ostension. The *ostended point*, as I shall call it, is the point where the line of the pointing finger first meets an opaque surface. What characterises *direct ostension*, then, is that the term which is being ostensively explained is true of something that contains the ostended point.

0174 While the additional class of ostension, known as *deferred ostension*, would not seem to be applicable in this case. Deferred ostension is where one points at, say, a fuel gauge and not the fuel to show that there is fuel (to point at the fuel would be direct ostension, for what is being ostensively explained is true of something which

¹³⁴ In the following discussion Augustine will be shown to unravel the easily made confusion of epistemological and semantic considerations. To this end it will be shown that statements can be meaningful and useful without there necessarily being a theory of how one can have ground for believing them (cf. White: 1979, 7-10).

contains the ostended point: in Augustinian terms this would be to point at (*ostendere*) the thing itself (*rem ipsam*)¹³⁵. In deferred ostension one thing is shown in order to draw attention to another.

0175 However, the question as to what is to be understood by the term '*paries*' is important here, for it is not entirely clear whether the ostension here defines some particular wall (in this sense it would seem that '*significare*' means something like 'refers' in a narrow sense, where a term refers to a particular object to which it is applied), or the concrete general term (that is to say, '*paries*' is a sign of the extension or class of all walls); and, further, how one is to understand abstract singular terms and their relation to Forms is even less clear. This is to say, the term '*paries*' may directly refer to *this* wall here; may be used to signify this wall as a member of the extension or class of all walls; or may even signify, or to put it more clearly, may gain its significance from, Wall Itself, that is the Form of wall (depending on how one is to interpret '*rem ipsam*').

0176 With proper nouns like 'Socrates' or 'Rome' the issue is not so ambiguous, for it is clear that from one ostensive definition to the next there is the imputing of identity of the defined object. However, Augustine specifically chooses to focus upon the example of a common noun¹³⁶ where there is not necessarily any indication of identity from one ostension to the next.

0177 It is unclear how *direct* Augustine takes the above description of ostensive definition to be. That is to say, is defining a term equivalent to (1) referring directly to a particular material object, or (2) equivalent to signifying a conceptual class of objects, with physical extension, by means of an example of that class, or (3)

¹³⁵ Quine: 1969, 40.

¹³⁶ This problem arises more clearly at DM 8 with the introduction of the term '*fluuius*' and must be considered in due course in light of Porphyry's analysis of Aristotle's *Categories* and the treatment of

equivalent to signifying an abstract singular by means of a material object. (1) and (2) would be direct ostension in Quinean terms but (3) would be indirect, for the abstract object does not contain the ostended point, nor any point¹³⁷?

0178 This ambiguity in Augustine's choice of definiendum is significant and the question of what is understood as direct ostension will be seen to be extremely important in his thesis of knowledge acquisition.

4.1.1. Physical Objects.

0179 The example of '*paries*' raises the problem that ostension as presented above (0170) appears only to be applicable for physical objects which are present. As Adeodatus signals with the word '*nominibus*', this model also seems applicable only to nouns, with the further provision that these nouns must signify a material object.

Ad. hoc in solis nominibus, quibus corpora significantur, si eadem corpora praesentia sint, fieri posse concedo.

(5)

The provision is made that qualities must also be included, that is, things such as colour which are said to be 'in' bodies¹³⁸.

Aug. num colorem corpus dicimus ac non potius quandam corporis qualitatem?

Ad. ita est.

Aug. cur ergo et hic digito demonstrari potest? an addis corporibus etiam corporum qualitates, ut nihilo minus etiam istae, cum praesentes sunt, doceri sine uerbis possint?

Ad. ego cum corpora dicerem, omnia corporalia intellegi uolebam, id est omnia, quae in corporibus sentiuntur.

(5)

general terms, and the relationship between particular and general term, and their relationship with universals or transcendental Forms (v. *inf.* § 5).

¹³⁷ Cf. Quine: 1969, 40.

¹³⁸ Augustine here employs Aristotelian categorical analysis to introduce qualities which are corporeal in that they are in bodies.

All corporeal entities, and all that are perceived in them, are therefore stated as able, when present, to be ostensively defined.

0180 The exception is made that all visible entities can be ostensively defined but not all corporeal things. Properties such as heat and weight and things such as sound and smell, although corporeal, cannot be defined by being pointed to.

*Aug. considera tamen, utrum etiam hinc aliqua tibi excipienda sint.
Ad. bene admones; non enim omnia corporalia, sed omnia uisibilia dicere debui. fateor enim sonum, odorem, saporem, grauitatem, calorem et alia, quae ad ceteros sensus pertinent, quamquam sentiri sine corporibus nequeant et propterea sint corporalia, non tamen digito posse monstrari.*

(5)

That ostensive definition cannot be used so as to reveal all of the qualities in a body raises the question as to what manner of analysis reveals what specific quality is signified by a term.

0181 The deaf and actors (that is, mime artists) are able to demonstrate all manner of such things without the use of words.

Aug. numquamne uidisti, ut homines cum surdis gestu quasi sermocinentur ipsique surdi non minus gestu uel quaerant uel respondeant uel doceant uel indicent aut omnia, quae uolunt, aut certe plurima? quod cum fit, non utique sola uisibilia sine uerbis ostenduntur, sed et soni et sapes et cetera huiusmodi; nam et histriones totas in theatris fabulas sine uerbis saltando plerumque aperiunt et exponunt.

(5)

Any description of ostensive definition, therefore, must go beyond the scope of the present discussion whereby it amounts to pointing something out. Augustine moves from saying that one shows, or points, with one's finger to simply stating that actors and the deaf are able to show something without the use of words. This said, however, the issue as to whether an actor is able to show 'ex' is passed over for the present.

*Ad. nihil habeo, quod contradicam, nisi quod illud ex non modo ego, sed ne ipse quidem saltator histrio tibi sine uerbis quid significet posset ostendere.
Aug. uerum fortasse dicis; sed fingamus eum posse...*

(5-6)

0182 The consideration given to ostensive definition of physical objects suggests that when one points something out that there is some degree of ambiguity over what exactly is the ostended point. For when one points at an item for purposes of definition the visual stimulation which is experienced might validly be interpreted as the ostensible object or equally as the colour of it, while in addition there are numerous other non-ostensible qualities which one must interpret as either essential or non-essential to the term under definition. Augustine does not proceed to discuss this ambiguity or inscrutability immediately as he is at present more concerned with disambiguating the actual ostensive process itself before proceeding to the issues surrounding reference and its inscrutability.

4.1.2. non uerbo uerbum sed signo signum.

0183 Although actors and the deaf do not use words, they do nevertheless use signs. Therefore, the problem still remains for just as words are simply signs of the things themselves, and are not the things themselves, so too are other sorts of signs (such as gesture) just signs of the things they signify and so one is no closer to the things themselves.

Aug. uerum fortasse dicis; sed fingamus eum posse, non ut arbitror dubitas, quisquis ille motus corporis fuerit, quo mihi rem, quae hoc uerbo significatur, demonstrare conabitur, non ipsam rem futuram esse, sed signum. quare hic quoque non quidem uerbo uerbum, sed tamen signo signum nihilo minus indicabit, ut et hoc monosyllabum ex et ille gestus unam rem quandam significant, quam mihi ego uellem non significando monstrari.

(6)

0184 As the use of words to define words leads to a dilemma so too is this the case with signs, words are of course signs. Signs were defined as showing something beyond themselves (cf. 0095: DD 5.9-10; DDC 2.1) and so, as with words, it would

appear that there remains the problem of closing the gap between sign and signified. It therefore remains to propose a method whereby the move from sign to signified, from word to referent, can be validly and coherently made. To do this one must devise a theory of semiotic relations, for signs, and the related theory of meaning, for words. Augustine, therefore, proceeds to analyse 'showing' so as to determine the validity of this method of knowledge acquisition. At present, it is necessary to remove signs from the 'teaching' process so as to determine the validity of 'showing' in this process. That is to say, it is necessary to forward an acceptable method of knowledge acquisition as a hypothesis from which one can then begin to determine the applicability of sign theory to this hypothesis.

0185 In revealing the semiotic nature of pointing and gesturing (DM 6; 34) Augustine stresses the difficulty of defining signs other than by means of other signs, and to this extent it is clear that, in such cases, there is always a 'background language' present. That is, there are levels of interpretation present which separate one from the thing signified. This suggests that there are problems concerning specificity as regards the speaker's intention as to what is signified and as regards the hearer's awareness as to what is specifically the true nature/essence of the object referred to, while there is also the potential indeterminacy of necessary rule awareness which is inherent in any 'background language'.

0186 Augustine's introduction of the difficulty of using one sign to define another hinges upon the fact that with signs there is the need for rules, rules require interpretation, and interpretation introduces an intermediary between sign and signified.

0187 As pointing something out with one's finger is a sign, it would appear problematic as to whether anything can be shown without signs.

Ad. qui potest quod quaeris, oro te?

Aug. quomodo paries potuit.

Ad. ne ipse quidem, quantum ratio progrediens docuit, ostendi sine signo potest. nam et intentio digiti non est utique paries, sed signum datur, per quod paries possit uideri. nihil itaque uideo, quod sine signis ostendi queat.

(6)

Pointing is not the wall, but rather is a sign. A sign is here taken as something through which a thing can be ‘seen’ and is therefore an intermediary of sorts. It is this intermediary role which Augustine is at pains to avoid and this form of ostension shows the thing itself through something else, which is strictly speaking a sign.

0188 It can be seen that Augustine would not therefore regard ostensive definition in the sense of pointing to the definiendum as direct at all, rather Augustine is perhaps closest here to Wittgenstein in that Wittgenstein questions pointing’s status as direct ostension due to the very fact that it presupposes a background language. In his *Philosophical Grammar* (PG 46-7) Wittgenstein doubts that pointing should be considered a ‘primary sign’¹³⁹, in contrast to words, which are ‘secondary’ signs¹⁴⁰. Augustine is clearly thinking along the same lines in this, for pointing, like words, is not a direct link with reality for it functions by means of a rule, that is, it has a meaning which is an intermediary between the gesture and the reality to which it refers. Pointing is semiotic and as such it necessitates, for Augustine, a conceptual intermediary of sorts (v. sup. 0095).

0189 Although one can usually rely on someone interpreting a sign such as pointing in a predictable way¹⁴¹ and can therefore interpret someone’s pointing to be in the

¹³⁹ ‘Primary’ in that it supplies a direct connection between language and reality (cf. Stern: 1995, 117).

¹⁴⁰ The specific context under consideration in the *Philosophical Grammar* is the context of rule-governed activity in, particularly, language learning. This discussion is startlingly similar in many ways to much of what is argued in the DM, however, at present what is of interest is what Wittgenstein’s discussion reveals about Augustine’s intention in DM 6.

¹⁴¹ Augustine clearly felt this to be the case, and even describes certain ‘given’ signs (v. sup. § 3.3.4) as evident of the intention of the giver, a sort of natural vocabulary of all races (*conf.* 1.13). Also, Wittgenstein held that “[i]t is part of human nature to understand pointing with the finger in the way that we do.” (PG 52). Nevertheless, this does not disallow the possibility of some sort of deviant interpretation (Stern: 1995, 119), and it is in this spirit that Augustine wants to arrive at the

direction from hand to fingertip, it is possible to interpret it in the opposite direction, from fingertip to hand. As noted, there is a need to understand the rules or the meaning of the sign. Indeed, to look at the finger, rather than looking in the direction of the pointing finger, is to fail to grasp any rule or meaning at all¹⁴², it is like listening only to the sound of a word. When one understands what the pointing gesture signifies then one understands to look in the direction of the pointing to the object¹⁴³, and so too with words one hears the sound and understands the semiotic correlation of sound to thing, through the medium of memory and mind, and so look at the thing. In such a way one can begin to gain a sense of the sort of mental intermediary Augustine posits between sign and reality, and the sort of thing he understands as the meaning of a word which correlates the word with reality.

0190 It will be useful to distinguish Augustine's classes of ostension into 'direct' (v. *inf.* § 4.2) and 'indirect' (words, pointing, and in fact all signs fall into this category)¹⁴⁴.

4.2. Direct Ostension.

0191 Direct ostension for Augustine is demonstration, that is to say it is that in which one directly performs what is to be defined, or taught. This category is explicated by means of actions: it is notable that the analysis of ostensive definition moves progressively from concrete to abstract, from physical object to qualities, and then to actions. There is a systematic undermining of the various things which could

definiendum without the possibility of any deviancy. Accepting the practicalities of communication is, for Augustine, one thing, and a rigorous approach to determining the place of language in knowledge acquisition is another altogether.

¹⁴² This grasping of the meaning or rule implied by the sign has been called the 'interpretant' or 'proper significate effect' by Peirce (e.g. in 'Letter to Lady Welby: What is meaning?' in Peirce vol. 8 (1958)).

¹⁴³ Directly ostended in Quinean terms.

be taught, in any traditional sense, without signs. However, that said, this type of ostension, direct ostension, is what Augustine is concerned with - that through which something is shown directly in itself, with no intermediary sign by which something other than the sign comes to one's attention.

Aug. quid? si ex te quaererem, quid sit ambulare, surgeresque et id ageres, nonne re ipsa potius quam uerbis ad me docendum aut ullis aliis signis uteris?

Ad. fateor ita esse et pudet me rem tam in promptu positam non uidisse; ex qua etiam mihi milia rerum iam occurrunt, quae ipsae per se ualeant non per signa monstrari, ut edere, bibere, sedere, stare, clamare et innumerabilia cetera.

(6)

0192 It should be said that this does not mean that items other than those which can be enacted cannot be directly ostended, and indeed this will be seen to be the case, but rather that for ease of explication certain types of item are better suited than others. Rather, Augustine holds that reason can be affected through two 'given', perceptual media: deeds and words.

duo igitur uideo, in quibus potentia uisusque rationis possit ipsis etiam sensibus admoueri, opera hominum, quae uidentur, et uerba, quae audiuntur. in utroque autem utitur mens gemino nuntio pro corporis necessitate, uno, qui oculorum est, altero aurium. itaque cum aliquid uidemus congruentibus sibi partibus figuratum, non absurde dicimus rationabiliter apparere, itemque, cum aliquid bene concinere audimus, non dubitamus dicere, quod rationabiliter sonat.

(ord. 2.32)

As has been seen, Augustine has been attempting to arrive at a valid description of teaching through words and at present he is attempting the same through human actions. In fact, the first reference to ostensive definition in Augustine is specifically concerned with that type which one can see is, for him, fundamental, namely, performance.

quae cum dicta essent, puer de domo, cui dederamus id negotii, cucurrit ad nos et horam prandii esse nuntiavit. tum ego. quid sit, inquam, moueri, non

¹⁴⁴ Quine's 'direct' and 'deferred' and Wittgenstein's 'primary' and 'secondary' are both useful for clarifying some of the issues raised by Augustine, but neither accurately reflects Augustine's analysis.

definire nos puer iste sed ipsis oculis cogit ostendere. eamus igitur et de isto loco in alium locum transeamus. nam nihil est aliud, nisi fallor, moueri.
(ord. 2.18)

4.2.1. Specificity (1).

0193 The difficulty which this form of direct ostension does not seem to dispel is that it makes demands on the understanding of the person to whom the item is being shown. If, for example, one were walking and were asked by someone who was completely unaware what the term ‘walking’ means there is the complexity in that if one adds something to one’s walk to highlight the fact that *this* is walking (one may slightly speed up, for example) then the other person may think that it is the act of hastening that is meant by the term ‘walking’. Once again the problem arises from the gap between word and reality and at this point, perhaps most clearly yet in the dialogue, is seen the difficulty caused by the necessity for understanding and interpretation to be introduced so as to bridge this gap.

Aug. age nunc dic mihi, si omnino nesciens huius uerbi uim abs te ambulante quaererem, quid sit ambulare, quomodo me doceres?

Ad. id ipsum agerem aliquanto celerius, ut post interrogationem tuam aliqua nouitate admonereris et tamen nihil aliud fieret quam id, quod deberet ostendi.

Aug. scisne aliud esse ambulare aliud festinare? nam et qui ambulat, non continuo festinat et qui festinat, non continuo ambulat¹⁴⁵; dicimus enim et in scribendo et in legendo aliisque innumerabilibus rebus festinationem. quare cum illud, quod agebas, celerius ageres post interrogationem meam, putarem ambulare nihil esse aliud quam festinare - id enim noui addideras - et ob hoc fallerer.

(6)

0194 This example introduces the question of specificity, or where one is to understand the determination or delimitation of a definition. There is apparently a

¹⁴⁵ Cf. the methodological similarity to the ‘semantic’ differentiations of Prodicus (Plato, *Prt.* 337a-c).

certain degree of inscrutability in regards to the listener/interpreter making sense of the intention of the person giving the definition.

0195 The further qualification must then be made that those things/actions can be shown which one is not doing at the time when asked. The exception here is speaking itself, for its sole function is signifying and therefore it cannot be performed without employing signs¹⁴⁶.

Ad. fateor non nos posse rem monstrare sine signo, si cum id agimus interrogemur; si enim nihil addamus, putabit qui rogat nolle nos ostendere contemptoque se in eo quod agebamus perseuerare. sed si de his roget, quae agere possumus, nec eo tamen tempore quo agimus roget, possumus post eius interrogationem id agendo re ipsa potius quam signo demonstrare quod rogat, nisi forte loquentem me interroget, quid sit loqui; quicquid enim dixerō, ut eum doceam, loquar necesse est. ex quo securus docebo, donec ei planum faciam quod uult, non recedens a re ipsa, quam sibi uoluit demonstrari, nec signa quaerens, quibus eam ostendam praeter ipsam.

Aug. acutissime omnino. quare uide, utrum conueniat iam inter nos ea posse demonstrari sine signis, quae aut non agimus cum interrogamur et tamen statim agere possumus aut ipsa forte signa agimus; cum enim loquimur, signa facimus, de quo dictum est significare.

Ad. conuenit.

(6-7)

Therefore one may ostensibly define, directly and without signs, whatever one is not doing when asked and when one is able to do so immediately.

0196 It can be seen then that Augustine stresses how hard it is to explain signs except by means of other signs (DM 6; 34) and that, even when one reduces ostension to directly showing something in itself, there remains the problem of specificity. This idea of specificity primarily raises the question of the speaker's intention as to what is signified (and the apparent inscrutability of this for the listener) and secondly raises that of the hearer's awareness as to what is, in fact, the true nature/essence of the object referred to.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. signs as things whose whole being rests in signifying (v. *sup.* 0087-0092).

0197 The attempted resolution of these questions is passed over for the present and are considered *suo loco* throughout the following dialogue. For the present Augustine accepts that direct ostension as so described (§ 4.2) is possible and, therefore, proceeds to analyse the possibility of ostension by means of a threefold classification of modes of communication and communicables (v. *inf.* § 4.3). In the course of this classificatory analysis the major issues of what has been termed ‘back-ground language’, ‘specificity’, and ‘inscrutability’ will return.

0198 In fact, the questions surrounding specificity and of where one is to understand the delimitation of a definition leads directly to the following classification of signs (DM 7-18) and demonstrates a useful methodological tool. However, specificity, or more correctly, ambiguity, will be seen to reveal itself also as of central concern to the ability of language to clearly and unambiguously delimit its own items of reference.

4.3. Classification of Communicables and Modes of Communication.

0199 Augustine lists three communicative classifications:

- (i) when one is asked about signs: signs can be shown through signs.

Aug. cum ergo de quibusdam signis quaeritur, possunt signis signa monstrari...

(7)

- (ii) when one is asked about things, which are not signs:

- (a) things can be shown through performance, if possible.

Aug. cum autem de rebus, quae signa non sunt, aut eas agendo post inquisitionem, si agi possunt...

(7)

- (b) things can be shown through signs, by means of which they can be understood.

Aug. aut signa dando, per quae animaduerti queant.

(7)

0200 This classification, in addition to the three modes of communication, also reveals two classes of communicables: signs and things. More specifically, signs are things, in that they are something (i.e. they are not nothing), but they are things which are signs; while things are those things which are not signs¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁷ v. *sup.* 0087-0092.

5. Classification (1): Signs Shown by Signs.

0201 The following classification of ‘signs shown by signs’ takes the word as representative of the basic semiotic item. This approach is both coherent with Augustine’s view of words as signs *par excellence* (DDC 1.2), and is, of course, also coherent with the specific epistemic and linguistic considerations of the DM.

0202 However, although the word is taken as the basic item of consideration, what will be of primary concern is not the word *per se* but rather the relation of the word to that which it signifies, or shows (*monstrare*, cf. DM 7)¹⁴⁸. As it has been, preliminarily, accepted that there is a basis (that is, ostension *qua* performance, *v. sup.* § 4.2) for grasping the significance of a word, or sign (and, accordingly, a basis for language learning and development¹⁴⁹), it is now possible to move on to a consideration of the relationship between words, and signs, and the reality they signify.

0203 The analysis of language begins from where that of ostension left off, for if one accepts that an epistemic basis exists for language as was seen to be provided by ostension then one must clarify any areas of inscrutability which exist in respect to language. This inscrutability is more accurately described in linguistic terms as ‘ambiguity’, and just as with ostension, so too with language this ambiguity must be accounted for so as to allow a valid basis for knowledge acquisition by means of words, or indeed any signs.

0204 It should be said that much of Augustine’s following consideration of ambiguity (which will be seen to be crucial to the conclusions arrived at in the

¹⁴⁸ The application of the ostensive concept of showing as a metaphorical term used to elucidate the semiotic/linguistic process will be discussed below (§ 5.2.1.2.5.6).

dialogue as a whole) is greatly influenced by the Stoic discussions of ‘ἀμφιβολία’¹⁵⁰. The specifics of Stoic influence will be discussed at the relevant points in the analysis of Augustine’s arguments, in terms of their discovery, their explication, and their resolution.

0205 At present it suffices to say that Augustine approaches the class of ‘signs shown by signs’ from the perspective of the conclusions arrived at, and from the discoveries made, in the discussion of ostension¹⁵¹, and in this way it is accepted that one can demonstrate what a word signifies. However, although the difficulty of the linguistic regress (*v. sup.* § 3.5 and § 3.5.1) is, apparently, defused in this way, it remains to deal with the issue of ambiguity in linguistic communication, and, therefore, with the related issue of the validity of words as evidence and as a means towards knowledge acquisition¹⁵².

0206 In the course of this discussion Augustine presents Adeodatus with a methodological instrument for the analysis of such issues. This is the Platonic method of ‘collection and division’ (Plato, *Phdr.* 265d-e). Strictly speaking the collection has already occurred progressively from the definition of ‘sign’ to the division into communicables and modes of communication. However, with the analysis of ‘signs shown by signs’ there begins a systematically, and self-consciously, didactic application of the method of division as a tool for disambiguation (as described in *Phdr.* 265e-266a). As mentioned above (0204), the approach towards ambiguity in its specifically linguistic, or perhaps more properly, semantic aspects is Stoic but,

¹⁴⁹ Essential elements needed for a full understanding of the implications of the DM for Augustine’s view of language acquisition will be discussed in this chapter (namely, § 5). Therefore, a consideration of language acquisition must be postponed for the present (*v. inf.* § 8.1.3).

¹⁵⁰ On Stoic considerations of ambiguity cf. Atherton: 1993. Ambiguity will be considered in due course, *v. inf.* § 6.

¹⁵¹ The discussion of signs will in turn necessitate a return and revision of the conclusions reached in the discussion of ostension (*v. inf.* § 7).

¹⁵² Although both of these issues are central to the present chapter, their full significance will be seen only in the resolution of the dialogue as a whole.

nevertheless, this approach is couched in general terms in a Platonic methodology.

This, unacknowledged, synthesising approach is typical of Augustine.

0207 In this method of approach to signs which are shown by signs Augustine can finally begin to elucidate how it is that words signify. This is achieved through a more and more accurate consideration of what the signification of words actually is. That is to say, by means of a precise understanding of what it is that words actually signify one can begin to see how this signifying might be achievable¹⁵³.

5.1. Signification of Words.

0208 In speech there is a threefold division of signification:

- (1) Words are signified by words.

Aug. uidetur ergo mihi loquendo nos aut uerba ipsa signare uerbis...
(7)

- (2) Other signs are signified by words.

Aug. ...aut alia signa, uelut cum gestum dicimus aut litteram - nam his duobus uerbis quae significantur, nihilo minus signa sunt...
(7)

- (3) Something which is not a sign is signified by words.

Aug. ...aut aliquid aliud, quod signum non sit, uelut cum dicimus lapis. hoc enim uerbum signum est - nam significat aliquid - sed id quod eo significatur, non continuo signum est...
(7)

0209 Division (3) is omitted for the present as it belongs to the communicative classification (ii.b) where things, which are not signs, are shown through signs (v. *sup.* 0199). Therefore, the division of signs which signify signs is twofold, as seen from

¹⁵³ In arriving at this the concepts of recollection and ostension will be seen to be central (v. *inf.* § 7, § 8, and § 9).

the example of language. In this class signs either signify (1) the same signs¹⁵⁴, as words signify words¹⁵⁵, or (2) other signs, as words signify other sorts of signs.

Aug. ...et partes in eo duas comperimus, cum aut eadem aut alia signa signis docemus uel commemoramus...

(7)

5.2. Audible and Visible Signs.

0210 It is possible to further divide signs in that they are perceived in different ways. Words pertain to hearing, and are audible signs, while gestures pertain to sight, and are visible signs. With reference to words, it is made clear that written words are secondary to spoken words in that they are visible signs of audible signs: they bring that which pertains to the ears to the mind via the eyes.

Aug. dic ergo signa quae uerba sunt, ad quem sensum pertineant.

Ad. ad auditum.

Aug. quid gestus?

Ad. ad uisum.

Aug. quid? cum uerba scripta inuenimus, num uerba non sunt? an signa uerborum uerius intelleguntur...ita fit, ut cum scribitur uerbum, signum fiat oculis, quo illud, quod ad aures pertinet, ueniat in mentem.

(8)

0211 Therefore, with words which are signs of the same sort of signs (i.e. words which signify words), although it is possible that there may be visible signs, the primary mode is audible. Augustine defines written words as signs of spoken words¹⁵⁶ (DD 5.17-31; DM 8; DDC 2.5) and not as signs of mental events or thoughts, to this extent Augustine is in broad agreement with Aristotle (*int.* 16a3-4). Strictly speaking

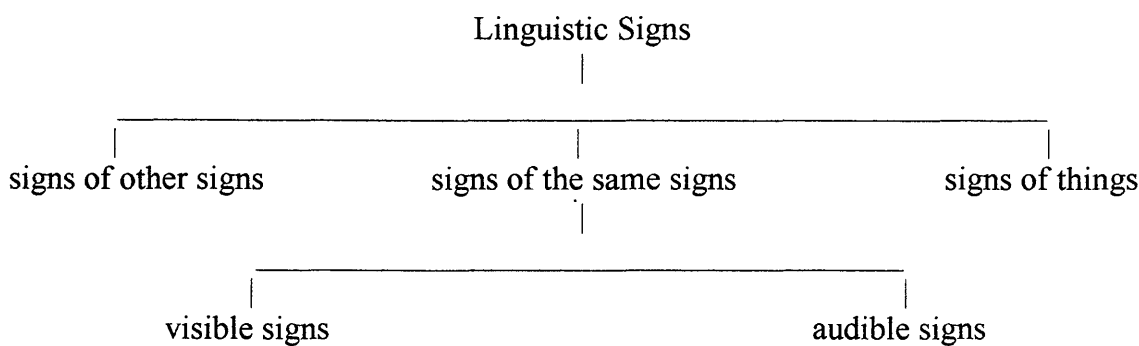
¹⁵⁴ The class of signs which signify the same signs does not refer to such cases as that of sign X and sign Y signify the same thing, Z, but rather refers to signs, such as words, which signify the same sort of signs as themselves: that is, words as signs which signify words, not words as signs which signify other sorts of signs, such as gestures.

¹⁵⁵ There is the additional ambiguity in that 'signifying the same signs, as words signify words' may be read (1) broadly, as including any case where one word signifies another word, or (2) narrowly, as only including those cases where a word signifies itself. In this context Augustine intends the broader reading (1). The narrow reading (2) will be discussed in due course (*v. inf.* § 5.5 ff.).

written words are not even words¹⁵⁷ but rather are signs which indicate to the mind that which may be uttered as a word. This is to say, the written term ‘chair’ indicates the vocal sound, sounded within as it were, [chair] to the mind and it is this vocal sound which one sounds within (DM 2) so as to bring the ‘thing itself’ to mind. The mental event which the written word refers to therefore is not the ‘thing’ explicitly referred to but rather the vocal word, whether uttered or thought of, and this vocal word refers to the thing explicitly referred to¹⁵⁸.

0212 The division under consideration, and reached at this point, can be schematised¹⁵⁹ as follows.

(D6)



0213 This schema of linguistic signs can be inserted into the wider classification which has progressively been developed throughout the dialogue. This classification, with that of linguistic signs inserted, is as follows.

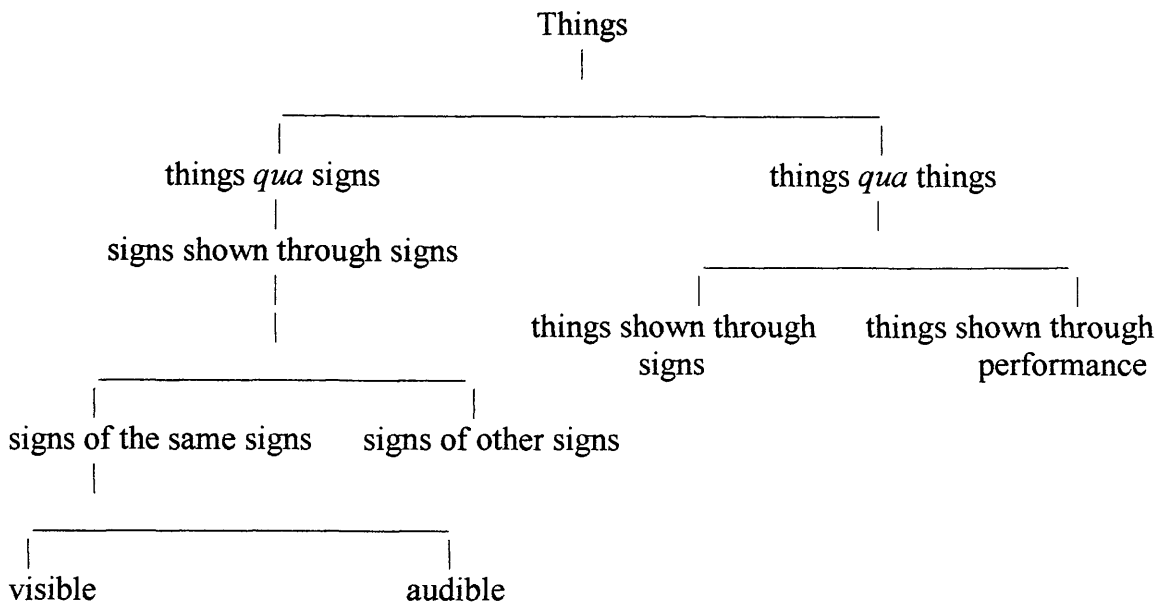
¹⁵⁶ For a fuller discussion of this issue cf. Kirwan: 1989, 54-5.

¹⁵⁷ As noted by Kirwan (1989, 54), written letters are not even letters for letters are parts of a (vocal) word, i.e. a vowel or consonant. They are the smallest part of an articulate vocal sound (DD 5.25-26).

¹⁵⁸ This may be seen as an example of Quinean deferred ostension (v. *sup.* 0174) for the written word ‘chair’ signifies the ostended point <chair> via the utterance [chair]. For example, if someone who can speak but cannot read English were to point to the word ‘chair’ written on a page and ask “What does that mean?”, and the interlocutor were to say “Chair”, the direct reference of the written word would be the utterance and the direct reference of the utterance, and hence indirect of the written word, would be the item <chair>.

¹⁵⁹ At significant points, or breaks, in the process of division a diagrammatic representation of the stage reached will be presented for the sake of clarity.

(D7)



5.2.1. Definition of 'uerbum' (1).

0214 A word (*uerbum*) is defined as that which is uttered in an articulate voice

(*articulata uoce profertur*) with some significance (*cum aliquo significatu*).

Aug. ...ut uerbum sit, quod cum aliquo significatu articulata uoce profertur - uox autem nullo alio sensu quam auditu percipi potest. ita fit, ut cum scribitur uerbum, signum fiat oculis, quo illud, quod ad aures pertinet, ueniat in mentem.

(8)

From this definition it can be observed that in the communicative process there is one who produces the word (*profertur*) and one who receives the word (*percipi potest...ueniat in mentem*), while the word itself is presented as dual in nature. The word has, as one element, sound (*uox*), and as the other, signification (*significatus*).

This gives a sequence as follows:

(D8)

transmitter → (sound + signification) → receiver

0215 It is clearly stated that signs, and therefore words, make something come into, or to the attention of, the mind. In this case of written words what occurs is that the visual sign (i.e. the written word) makes one think of the verbal sign, that is a word in the sense of ‘*quod cum aliquo significatu articulata uoce profertur*’. The distinction between what pertains to the ears and what comes to the attention of the mind will be discussed at length below (§ 5.6.1.); however, it is clear that it is the *uox* which pertains to the ears (*uox autem nullo alio sensu quam auditu percipi potest*), while that which comes into mind is in some way related to the other element in a word, namely the signification.

5.2.1.1. Significatus and Significatio.

0216 At this point it will be useful to clarify Augustine’s terminology employed in discussing signification and closely related ideas. The translation ‘signification’ is in general a reasonably accurate term for the concept under consideration in the DM. However, Augustine chooses to use two distinct terms (*significatus* - cf. *TLL* 4, 238; and *significatio* - cf. *TLL* 4, 238) in different contexts; this distinction suggests that there are different nuances being highlighted in these different contexts. For this reason, *significatus* has generally been translated ‘significance’, while *significatio* has been translated ‘signification’.

0217 ‘*Significatus*’ only occurs, in the works of Augustine, in the DM and is the term consistently employed in the definition of ‘*uerbum*’¹⁶⁰. ‘*Significatus*’ is a substantive derived from the verb ‘*significare*’, with the ‘-tus’ termination from the supine stem denoting the *action* of the specific verb. In both the definition of

¹⁶⁰ DM 8; 9; 10; 11;12.

‘*uerbum*’ and in the two other occurrences of ‘*significatus*’¹⁶¹ there is a clear sense of act or of process involved. In the definition (v. *sup.* 0214), a word is defined as a combination of sound and signification, and the fact that the articulate sound is produced (*profertur*) together with some (act of) signifying (*cum aliquo significatu*) highlights the intentionality implicit in the nature of a word. A word is a meaningful utterance in that it is intentionally produced through the combined act of producing an articulate sound and of signifying. ‘*Significatus*’ occurs in close association with ‘*uerbum*’ and with the communicative act.

0218 Also, the form of the definition of ‘*uerbum*’ emphasises that a word is that which is uttered in an articulate voice *with* some significance, stressing the close connection of *uox* and *significatus*: a word is a *uox* with *significatus* but can be conceptually separated into *sonus* and *significatio*.

0219 Therefore, the sense implicit in ‘*significatus*’ is that of the action or process of signifying, and it is for this reason that it is this term which is solely used in Augustine’s definition of ‘*uerbum*’ in the DM, where the interest in words is primarily in their role in the communicative act or process.

0220 ‘*Significatio*’ also occurs a number of times in the DM¹⁶², however, it does so in rather different contexts. It too is a derived substantive from the supine stem, however, the ‘-tio’ termination signifies the *abstract*. Therefore, in distinction to ‘*significatus*’, ‘*significatio*’ focuses upon the concept of signification in the abstract and in separation from the word or communicative process. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the following examples:

Aug. ...nomen et uerbum, differentem habeant significationem...
(12)

¹⁶¹ DM 32; 33.

¹⁶² DM 8; 12; 13; 17; 23; 30; 34; 36.

Aug. ...in quo...signo [caput]...duo sint, sonus et significatio...
(34)

In DM 12 the concept of signification is being highlighted in abstraction from the particular words: both words have a difference, other than sound, and this is their signification; while in DM 34 the emphasis is on the fact that there are two elements in the word which may be considered separately, namely, sound and signification. In Augustine's definition of '*uerbum*' the stress is that a word depends on the production of sound and signification in unison¹⁶³.

0221 One can imagine a definition Augustine could have given of '*uerbum*' where he could have made use of the *sonus/significatio* distinction in DM 34: in a word there are two, conceptually¹⁶⁴, separable elements, sound (*sonus*) and signification (*significatio*), when a word is uttered these elements are combined so as to produce an articulate sound (*uox articulata*) together with some signification (*cum aliquo significatu*). In abstraction a word consists of *sonus* and *significatio*; while, so as to be a meaningful utterance proper, a word must consist of the combined acts of uttering and signifying, thus successfully enacting the communicative process.

0222 To reiterate, Augustine draws the distinction as regards signification as (1) the intentional application of it in the communicative process, and as (2) an item which may be considered in itself in abstraction. Therefore, the translation of *significatus* employed is 'significance' so as to distinguish between its use as a term for the combined process involved in uttering a word where there is sound *with* significance, and the use of *significatio* (translated 'signification') where the focus is upon a word as the separable concepts of sound *and* signification.

¹⁶³ Augustine is here considering '*uerbum*' in much the same way as he does '*dictio*'. This relation will be elaborated upon below (§ 5.2.1.2.).

5.2.1.2. Definition of ‘uerbum’ (2).

0223 In any consideration of Augustine’s approach to language one must confront a number of divergent philosophical positions. That which perhaps looms largest is the overarching Platonic metaphysics which informs every stage in Augustine’s thinking about language and its relationship to reality and knowledge. However, also of central importance are the two most important theories of language and meaning in the ancient world, namely those of Aristotle and the Stoics.

0224 Augustine essentially employs a Stoic theory of meaning and uses a Stoic terminology to do so. However, the materialism of Stoic ontology jarred with his Platonic sensibilities and he is seen to employ Aristotelian ideas as a bridge, as it were, between the Platonism of his metaphysics and ontology and the Stoicism of his theory of meaning. This method also necessarily involves the Neoplatonic syncretising of Plato and Aristotle.

0225 In this approach, as he often does, Augustine finds a position which is neither one nor the other, which is neither fully Stoic nor yet Aristotelian, but which is something different and new¹⁶⁵.

0226 At this point in the discussion it will be useful to consider the impact of the Aristotelian and the Stoic theories of meaning, and to some extent the reception of these theories by subsequent thinkers, on the Augustinian theory of meaning, with particular attention being given to those areas most directly affecting the DM.

0227 Therefore, the following discussion will be concerned with the problem of ‘meaning’: that is to say, that which makes signs into ‘instruments’ of communication

¹⁶⁴ This conceptual separation will be of importance in Augustine’s treatment of the use/mention distinction (v. *inf.* § 6.1.1).

and understanding. Primarily, a consideration will be given to Augustine's relationship to the theorising of other philosophers both in defining the nature of the debate and in the actual investigation into communication. Central to this will be the analysis of the relationship between words and 'ideas/concepts' and between words and reality.

5.2.1.2.1. The Platonic Context.

0228 The concept of 'natural' relationships in semiotics is central to the study of language. This concept involves the metaphor of 'growth' in that it suggests that there is a distinction between signs intentionally created by people and those whose development is more accurately understood as a *process*. The question as to how signs emerge and how they possess meaning is closely related and an attempt to analyse Augustine's understanding of this relationship will be of major concern in the following discussion.

0229 The question of how linguistic signs, or perhaps less anachronistically, of how language in general came to be much occupied the thinkers of the Sophistic 'movement' (v. *sup.* § 2.3.1) and it is in reaction to many of the central questions raised by these thinkers that Plato wrote his great dialogue concerned with language, the *Cratylus*. The terms of the debate can, therefore, be seen to have been initiated by the Sophists but to have been focused and firmly established by Plato.

0230 In the dialogue the discussion between the interlocutors apparently revolves around the issue of whether the meaning of a word is based on convention or whether its meaning depends upon the nature of that which it signifies. Cratylus supports the

¹⁶⁵ Exactly how new is made difficult to ascertain due to the lack of evidence for Stoic theory. Augustine maintains a position which is largely Stoic, but, as will be seen, there are elements in his

position that names are natural (Plato, *Crat.* 383ab), while Hermogenes argues the case that names are arbitrary and conventional (Plato, *Crat.* 384cd). However, more accurately, the dialogue is not concerned with "... whether language is natural to humans, or if signs have natural meanings rather than meanings given them by people. That the names for things are made by people...is uncontested. Rather, the dialogue's central question is whether it makes sense to distinguish between correctness¹⁶⁶ and incorrectness in naming" (Keller: 1998, 13). To this extent much of the focus of the *Cratylus* concerns the relation of names to their objects and the question as to what these objects might be.

0231 Plato confronts the issue, in the terms established by the debate underway during the period, by considering whether there is a relationship between words (specifically, names) and reality such that there is a natural correctness or whether there is a relationship such that there is an arbitrary correctness.

0232 The question of arbitrariness is a vexed one for Hermogenes due to the fact that he unwisely opts for an extreme form of arbitrariness. The reason behind this extreme interpretation would appear to be that the most obvious example of arbitrariness in names is that of proper names (Plato, *Crat.* 384b; 384d).

Arbitrariness, however, need not be so radical that anything can correctly be called by any name that anyone whosoever chooses, and the problems inherent in such an extreme position are pointed out by Socrates (*Crat.* 385a ff.). Yet, the basic position taken need not imply so extreme a conclusion and does support the idea that the name of a thing is conventional and, therefore, the aspect of language concerned with the relation of name to object referred to has no concern with the correctness of names.

theory of meaning which are clearly not Stoic.

¹⁶⁶ 'Correctness' concerns the relation between a name and its object (*significatum*).

0233 The assumption of Hermogenes that words in general function like proper names most probably derives from the fact that proper names are the most obvious example of clearly arbitrary names - also, they are one of the few examples whereby humans carry out a deliberate and to an extent arbitrary act of name giving. Proper names are in actuality exceptions to the rule and as such are less than ideal for making generalisations. Convention is not equivalent to arbitrariness - an error made by Hermogenes¹⁶⁷.

0234 Socrates proposes a possible description of the function and nature of names in which it is initially stated that things have their own fixed reality which is neither relative to, nor caused by, humans but exists in itself according to its own reality which is imposed by nature (Plato, *Crat.* 386d e). Also, in accord with this, actions also have their appropriate nature (Plato, *Crat.* 386e-387a). From this it follows that actions can be carried out correctly or incorrectly; and since speaking is an action (387b) and naming a part of speaking (387c), then humans cannot give names according to their will and there is in fact a correctness in naming (Plato, *Crat.* 387d).

0235 From this Socrates poses the suggestion that names/words are instruments which are employed so as to perform a specific action (Plato, *Crat.* 387e-388a). So, the definition of names is one in which they are instruments which are used to teach others and to separate things in accordance with their natures.

ΣΩ.: ὄνομα ἄρα διδασκαλικόν τί ἐστὶν ὄργανον καὶ διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας..

(Plato, *Crat.* 388b)

The instrument (ὄργανον) functioning in language is employed so as to name/refer (ὄνομα), communicate/teach (διδασκαλικόν), and classify (διακριτικόν). This instrumental theory of signs appears then to lead to the conclusion that there is indeed

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Saussure, *Cours*, Chpt. 5, 3. Saussure held that the word 'arbitrary' should not imply that the

a correctness of names and that Cratylus' natural explanation of language holds true. However, the dialogue concludes with the apparent refutation of the natural explanation revealed through the process of etymologising and one is left with a situation where neither the conventional nor the natural theory of language, as presented in the dialogue, hold.

0236 The question concerning the view of names as instruments begs the question as to how one is to understand the term 'instrument' - is it that 'instrument' is metaphorical or that "[n]ot all instruments have a form which is dictated by their purpose" (Keller: 1998, 19)? Metaphors need not meet every aspect of that which they explicate and indeed by the very differences may clarify even more fully and it is on this point that the two interpretations of 'instrument' perhaps coincide. For the difficulty in the extreme form of an instrumentalist theory may be that either 'instrument' diverges from 'name' in that names function instrumentally through a conventional means, or that "[s]ome instruments are able to fulfil their respective purposes due to conventional use; words are such instruments, as are playing cards and money" (Keller: 1998, 19).

0237 Cratylus approaches the question of the correctness of names along similar lines to that of Hermogenes. That is to say, the relationship of word to object functions as names do to their bearers, and so he approaches the problem as though there were a direct relationship between word and object. It is for this reason that Cratylus, in arguing for the natural correctness of names, does so in terms of an etymological analysis (Plato, *Crat.* 384b).

0238 As concerns the question of the difficulties of Cratylus' etymologies a possible explanation may lie in the section of argumentation which leads up to, and introduces, the passage on 'natural' etymologies.

0239 Irrespective of whether one takes the etymologising of Socrates seriously¹⁶⁸ in the *Cratylus*, the 'name-giver' must know how to embody in the sounds and syllables that name which is naturally fitted to each object, that is, its 'ideal name' (Plato, *Crat.* 389d). However, the actual physical material from which these names are formed would appear to be less specifically relevant (Plato, *Crat.* 390a). Indeed, the fact that one is able to reveal one's mind to another through words that bear no resemblance to what one is referring to suggests that convention can enable things to be indicated which do not resemble their *designata* (Plato, *Crat.* 434e).

0240 The good 'name-giver' may employ the most accurate sounds and syllables in his language to best reflect the 'ideal name' of any particular thing but this does not free one from an interpretation which must be charged with leading to a degree of arbitrariness or conventionality.

0241 The *Cratylus* is a dialogue of two distinct halves, each proposing contrary analyses of language, and each finally resulting in a refutation of themselves to the benefit of their contrary: Hermogenes' position (convention) leads to a conclusion supporting Cratylus' (nature), while Cratylus' position leads to Hermogenes'. The solution to this puzzle is that which, with his own modifications, Aristotle arrived at in the *de interpretatione* and is evident in the *Cratylus* itself. The interpretation which Plato would appear to be encouraging the reader to make is one which takes both theories as valid but which does not take as extreme a position as either.

¹⁶⁸ The following interpretation need not be taken to disagree with, for example, Sedley (1998) who takes a positive view of Plato's intention in etymologising; but the way in which one understands 'natural' in this context would have to be revised by the relativising "...for A" such that the Greek word

0242 Words are arbitrary in the sense that they communicate through conventional means within linguistic communities. One cannot simply decide upon any name but must employ names accepted as meaningful within one's community - indeed, even with the atypical example of proper names there does tend to be a certain degree of limitation for although one may choose whatever name for a child one desires there is the tendency to use names linguistically and phonetically acceptable to one's community. This leads to the fact that different sounds, letters, and syllables may have a degree of association (harshness or softness, for example) whereby their sounds appear to naturally reflect the meaning of certain words within which they occur. Yet this is only apparently true for these sounds are nevertheless conventional.

0243 Both theories, as presented in the *Cratylus*, make similar errors due to their focus upon the naming relation within language, for Hermogenes bases his interpretation on the apparent prototypical and arbitrary nature of proper names, while the position of Cratylus takes etymology, even at the level of word sounds, to be natural. Neither is valid in its extreme form, while in a more generous interpretation one may accept that names are in fact arbitrary in that they are conventionally accepted within a linguistic community, even on the level of individual sounds which although not obviously conventional are, nevertheless, not natural. In addition to this there is, in Plato's interpretation, a 'natural' element in language in that there is a correct, ideal, name which a particular name (in whatever language one may happen to be using) represents. The mode of representation is, nevertheless, conventional. This may perhaps be best explained by reference to the term 'table' which can be represented by 'table', '*mensa*', 'τράπεζα', etc., just as the actual item <table> can be made of wood, stone, steel, etc. The material by which the item, <table>, is

λιπαρόν, for example, 'naturally' represents "sleekness" *for that linguistic community* (i.e. the

‘represented’ is in this sense conventional while that which is represented by all the different material representations, that is the formal item, is natural. Likewise with the term ‘table’ the various representations of it are conventional but the correct, or ideal, name which the various words represent is natural.

0244 How exactly one should understand this ideal name is problematic. It is relevant that words are held to bear a similar relation to reality, that is to the world of Forms, as particulars or pictures.

ἔστι δέ που καὶ τὸ ὄνομα μῖμημα, ὥσπερ τὸ ζωγράφημα.
(Plato, *Crat.* 431a)

0245 The question of the relation of an ideal name to the ideal Form which it presumably refers to is unclear - namely, is it the linguistic equivalent of the Form? That is to say, the Form functions as the intelligible element whereby all similar things are recognised and understood and it is possible that that which makes linguistic signs into instruments of communication, i.e. their meaning, is nothing other than the Form. The question of what names are is of central concern in the dialogue and the conclusion seems to be reached that in a strict sense only Forms can be named¹⁶⁹. If this interpretation is accurate it would seem to confirm that Plato is primarily concerned with epistemological issues¹⁷⁰ and for this reason, or due to a lack of terminological precision caused by the incipency of the treatment of such issues, discusses properly semantic issues in epistemic terms, with the inevitably resultant obscurity.

0246 In a ‘natural’ analysis the relation between the name and the object is independent of how the name is used in any particular language, while in a ‘conventional’ analysis the relation is dependent precisely upon the particular

Greeks).

¹⁶⁹ For a discussion of this cf. White: 1976, 132.

language and linguistic habits/practices of a linguistic community. Plato arrives at a conclusion somewhere between the two.

0247 In the conventionalist theory meaning would appear to depend on usage: by using [dog] to stand for <dog>, [dog] conventionally means <dog>. Yet Plato would seem to hold that the existence of Forms explain how one can know something and how words are meaningful: the Form of Beauty makes it possible for person *A* both to know that *x* is beautiful and to meaningfully say “*x* is beautiful”.

0248 Words are tools that enable us to distinguish between objects and all languages that carve up reality correctly will have the same ideal names (*Crat.* 389d). For “...Plato’s attack on naturalism is aimed at ordinary Greek words and not at the deep structure of language [i.e. ideal names], where the same name (category) is expressed by different words in different languages” (Modrak, 2001, 18). Also, “...Plato makes a strong case for the epistemic requirement for universal concepts of natural kinds and the importance of objective standards for correctness” (Modrak, 2001, 18) and it is to these that words must then refer if they are to adequately express truth (*Crat.* 439d-440b). How well actual utterances do this is questioned throughout the dialogue but the fact that Plato recognises a consistent and objective ideal name/deep structure suggests the possibility of accurate referencing

0249 What is of concern to an analysis of Augustine’s theory of linguistic signs is that Plato treats only of names, that (spoken) words are instruments which are used so as to name, communicate/teach, and to classify, and that they are employed so as to cause someone else to ‘look to’ the ideal name which they in some way represent or, through greater or lesser accuracy to the ideal name, cause the Form of the thing named to ‘come to mind’ more or less correctly.

¹⁷⁰ “[T]he *Cratylus*...is a treatment of problems having to do with language that arises directly out of

5.2.1.2.2. Aristotle's *Categories*.

0250 In approaching Augustine and his theory of language in relation to the work of Aristotle the most obvious place to begin is with the *Categories*. Augustine explicitly states, in the *Confessiones*, that he had, at about twenty years of age, read this work¹⁷¹ and had understood it without needing anyone to help explain it to him.

Et quid mihi proderat, quod annos natus ferme uiginti, cum in manus meas uenissent Aristotelica quaedam, quas appellant decem categorias...legi eas solus et intellexi? quas cum contulissem cum eis, qui se dicebant uix eas magistris eruditissimis non loquentibus tantum, sed multa in puluere depingentibus intellexisse, nihil inde aliud mihi dicere potuerunt, quam ego solus apud me ipsum legens cognoueram; et satis aperte mihi uidebantur loquentes de substantiis, sicuti est homo, et quae in illis essent, sicuti est figura hominis, qualis sit et statura, quot pedum sit, et cognatio, cuius frater sit, aut ubi sit constitutus aut quando natus, aut stet aut sedeat, aut calciatus uel armatus sit aut aliquid faciat aut patiat aliquid, et quaecumque in his nouem generibus, quorum exempli gratia quaedam posui, uel in ipso substantiae genere innumerabilia reperiuntur.

(conf. 4.28)

0251 This said, for Augustine to say that he had understood the *Categories* does not necessarily make it clear exactly how he had understood it. It would appear that following the standard readings of the text at that time¹⁷² that the young Augustine had understood, through his own reading (which was confirmed in discussion with others who had had the text explained by the 'most erudite teachers'), that the *Categories* was concerned primarily with linguistic terms, or predication.

crucial themes in Plato's epistemology and metaphysics" White: 1976, 131.

¹⁷¹ Marius Victorinus, who was an older contemporary of Augustine's, is known to have translated Aristotelian works, most notably the *Categories* and the *de Interpretatione*; and since Augustine himself mentions reading 'books of the Platonists' translated by Victorinus (conf. 8.3), it is possible that he may also have had access to his *Categories* and, perhaps, the *de Interpretatione*. Although there is no evidence for this, what is at least certain is that near contemporary translations, by Platonists, were available at the time. Also, in the 2nd century, Apuleius had written an exposition of the *de Interpretatione* in Latin.

¹⁷² The prevalent reading from Herminius (ap. Porph. in Cat. 59, 27-9), to Alexander of Aphrodisias (student of Herminius; also, cf. Simplicius in Cat. 10, 13-15), to Porphyry, through to Augustine's day was that the *Categories* was principally about linguistic items.

...illis decem praedicamentis putans quidquid esset omnino comprehensum...et tu [deus] subiectus esses magnitudini tuae aut pulchritudini...
(*conf.* 4.29)

0252 The generally dismissive tone with which Augustine looks back upon the reading of the text¹⁷³ by his younger self would seem to point towards an interpretation whereby he had understood the text in a manner perhaps rather more Peripatetic¹⁷⁴ than would have been acceptable to him in later life. Indeed the fact that he states that the reading given by the most learned teachers agreed with his own suggests that his interpretation was in accord with one of the prevalent readings of the time; which, taken together with the generally linguistic terminology in which he refers to the content of the text (*conf.* 4.29), points towards either a Neoplatonic or Peripatetic reading¹⁷⁵. Most telling perhaps is the fact that his main difficulty with the *Categories* as he had understood it as a young man was metaphysical, namely how the categorical scheme could account for God¹⁷⁶.

quid hoc mihi proderat, quando et oberat, cum etiam te, deus meus, mirabiliter simplicem atque incommutabilem, illis decem praedicamentis putans quidquid esset omnino comprehensum, sic intellegere conarer, quasi et tu subiectus esses magnitudini tuae aut pulchritudini, ut illa essent in te quasi in subiecto sicut in corpore, cum tua magnitudo et tua pulchritudo tu ipse sis, corpus autem non eo sit magnum et pulchrum, quo corpus est, quia etsi minus magnum et minus pulchrum esset, nihilominus corpus esset?
(*conf.* 4.29)

Accordingly, the reading as presented in the above passage suggests that the *Categories* is indeed primarily about linguistic items but that these linguistic items also correspond to an Aristotelian metaphysics where there is a division of simple

¹⁷³ The question as to how far Augustine is projecting later concerns into his account in the *Confessiones* should be noted, although it does not directly concern the above argument.

¹⁷⁴ In this context Peripatetic refers broadly to the followers of the Aristotelian tradition and not necessarily to any reading of the *Categories* which is loyal to Aristotle.

¹⁷⁵ The Neoplatonic reading is one which considers the *Categories* as essentially concerned with semantics, while the Peripatetic one is concerned primarily with ontological issues. These distinctions will be elaborated upon in the following discussion.

¹⁷⁶ The Aristotelian approach to this was to identify good in the category of substance, rather than in the category of quality, with god: cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.6. This interpretation was presumably unknown to Augustine

entities into ten categories. The reading given by the young Augustine was felt in later life to have been useful to an extent but it was the metaphysics which led to a grounding of its ontology in particulars which was felt to be such an obstacle to his understanding. Augustine had understood from the *Categories* that everything that exists could be predicated and that God too could be a subject for such things as greatness and beauty so that they might be in God as it were *in a subject just as in a body* (*ut illa essent in te quasi in subiecto sicut in corpore*). Therefore, the conclusion leads, for Augustine, to metaphysical problems for understanding the possibility of a transcendent God: *cum tua magnitudo et tua pulchritudo tu ipse sis, corpus autem non eo sit magnum et pulchrum, quo corpus est, quia etsi minus magnum et minus pulchrum esset, nihilominus corpus esset*.

0253 It is perhaps not insignificant that Augustine must have read the *Categories* sometime in the mid 370's and that during this time he had become a follower of the materialistic system of the Manichees¹⁷⁷. Augustine remained a Manichee, albeit becoming progressively more and more dissatisfied with the teachings, until after his reading of certain Platonic books¹⁷⁸ (*conf.* 7.13). In reading these 'books of the Platonists' Augustine gained an insight into the possibility of immaterial existence and of a transcendent God (*conf.* 7.13 ff.; 8.3 ff.), and of particular interest is the choice of such an obviously linguistic form in which to bring out the understanding these texts gave him to the relation between God, existence, and human understanding.

*et primo uolens ostendere mihi, quam «resistas superbis, humilibus autem»
des «gratiam» et quanta misericordia tua demonstrata sit hominibus uia*

¹⁷⁷ It seems that Augustine had become interested in the teachings of Mani not long after he had read Cicero's *Hortensius* (c. 373, when he would have been 19). It is not implausible that part of his motivation towards the materialism of that sect was due to the conclusions arrived at through his reading of the *Categories* (c.374).

¹⁷⁸ These texts were translated by Marius Victorinus (*conf.* 8.3), and would in all probability have included both Plotinus and Porphyry (cf. Courcelle: 1948; trans. 1969, 173-182).

humilitatis, quod «uerbum tuum caro factum est et habitauit» inter homines, procurasti mihi per quendam hominem immanissimo typho turgidum quosdam Platoniorum libros ex Graeca lingua in Latinam uersos, et ibi legi non quidem his uerbis, sed hoc idem omnino multis et multiplicibus suaderi rationibus, quod «in principio erat uerbum et uerbum erat apud deum et deus erat uerbum: hoc erat in principio apud deum; omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est,» «in eo uita est, et uita erat lux hominum; et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt»; et quia hominis anima, quamuis «testimonium» perhibeat «de lumine, non» est tamen ipsa «lumen», sed uerbum, deus, est «lumen uerum, quod inluminat omnem hominem uenientem in hunc mundum»; et quia «in hoc mundo erat, et mundus per eum factus est, et mundus eum non cognouit». quia uero «in sua propria uenit et sui eum non receperunt, quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios dei fieri credentibus in nomine eius», non ibi legi. item legi ibi, quia uerbum, deus, non ex carne, non ex sanguine non ex uoluntate uiri neque ex uoluntate carnis, sed ex deo natus est; sed quia uerbum caro factum est et habitauit in nobis, non ibi legi.

(*conf.* 7.13-14)¹⁷⁹

0254 Later still, in the *de Trinitate* Augustine's perspective on the *Categories* has so altered from his initial reading referred to in the *Confessiones* that he employs them so as to defend the thesis that the Trinity is essentially a unity (Book 5). The discussion is introduced by stating that God is such that:

*... cui enuntiando nulla competit dictio...*¹⁸⁰
(*trin.* 5.1)

and that:

*... quae de natura incommutabili et inuisibili summeque uiuente ac sibi sufficiente dicuntur non ex consuetudine uisibilium atque mutabilium et mortalium uel egenarum rerum esse metienda. sed cum in his etiam quae nostris corporalibus adiacent sensibus uel quod nos ipsi in interiore homine sumus scientia comprehendendis laboremus nec sufficiamus... sic intellegamus deum si possumus, quantum possumus, sine qualitate bonum, sine quantitate magnum...*¹⁸¹
(*trin.* 5.2)

¹⁷⁹ Cf. also *conf.* 7.16 ff. in which there are notable parallels with *de Trinitate* 5.3.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. the ineffable nature of the One in Plotinus, 5.14; 6.3-4.

¹⁸¹ Cf. All three passage (concerning the *Categories*, the 'books of the Platonists, and that from the *de Trinitate*) are linked by the common theme of mankind's being 'puffed up' with pride and arrogance at self-reliance.

In *de Trinitate* (Book 5) Augustine proceeds to forward an analysis whereby material reality and human concepts formed from this reality are comprehensible in Aristotelian categorical terms, but God and transcendent reality are not.

est tamen sine dubitatione substantia uel si melius hoc appellatur essentia... sicut enim ab eo quod est sapere dicta est sapientia et ab eo quod est scire dicta est scientia, ita ab eo quod est esse dicta est essentia... sed aliae quae dicuntur essentiae siue substantiae capiunt accidentias quibus in eis fiat uel magna uel quantacumque mutatio; deo autem aliquid eiusmodi accidere non potest. et ideo sola est incommutabilis substantia uel essentia quae deus est, cui profecto ipsum esse unde essentia nominata est maxime ac uerissime competit. quod enim mutatur non seruat ipsum esse, et quod mutari potest etiamsi non mutetur potest quod fuerat non esse, ac per hoc illud solum quod non tantum non mutatur uerum etiam mutari omnino non potest sine scrupulo occurrit quod uerissime dicatur esse.

(*trin.* 5.3)

0255 It can, therefore, be seen that there is apparent a movement in Augustine's interpretation of the *Categories* from his early years, in which there is a clear metaphysical element which leads to a Peripatetic ontology, through to the reading of the Neoplatonists, through which he gained a possible answer to the dilemmas raised for him concerning a transcendent God by his reading of the *Categories*, until one encounters an interpretation of the *Categories* employed in the *de Trinitate* whereby Augustine can regard the text as providing adequate grounds for analysing sensible reality and concepts derived from there, whilst also providing the scope for a realm of the transcendent.

0256 It will be argued that from as early as the *de magistro*¹⁸² there is ample evidence for an interpretation of the *Categories* which in large part follows that forwarded by Porphyry - an interpretation which had become standard in Neoplatonist

¹⁸² That is, in 389, a number of years after encountering the Neoplatonists and ample time to have either accomplished his own merging of a primarily linguistic reading of the *Categories* with the Neoplatonic metaphysical system; or, more probably, to have encountered the Neoplatonic synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism initiated to a large extent by Porphyry. This process of synthesis had long been underway, and it is highly probable that by Augustine's time, it would have already infiltrated, on some level, most, if not all, readings of Aristotle (and Plato) and so the step for

schools¹⁸³. In addition to this is the fact that Augustine had access to translations by Marius Victorinus, who himself translated the two most important Aristotelian texts for a reading of Augustine's theory of language, the *Categories* and *de Interpretatione* (v. sup. 0250 n.171). Victorinus, also, is known to have been a Neoplatonist and to have put a Neoplatonist slant on his interpretation of these texts, and was himself a Neoplatonising Christian.

5.2.1.2.3. Porphyry's Syncretisation of Plato and Aristotle.

0257 The viability of the categorical scheme of Aristotle was much debated in the ancient world and perhaps the most notable argument against the scheme was that of Plotinus (6.1-3). This, coupled with the developing prevalence of Neoplatonism, might well have decided the issue but for the fact that Porphyry opposed his teacher and held the view that one should not complain that the *Categories* fail to take into account the Platonic Forms.

...οὐκ ἂν εἶη περὶ γενῶν τοῦ ὄντος ἢ πραγματεία οὐδ' ὅλως περὶ πραγμάτων ἢ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον περὶ φωνῶν σημαντικῶν τῶν πραγμάτων.

(Porphyry, in *Cat.* 57,4-6)

ἔστιν γὰρ περὶ φωνῶν σημαντικῶν ἀπλῶν, καθὼ σημαντικαὶ εἰσι τῶν πραγμάτων...

(Porphyry, in *Cat.* 58,5-7)

...ἐπεὶ περὶ λέξεων σημαντικῶν ἢ πρόθεσις, αἱ δὲ λέξεις πρῶτως ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ ἐτέθησαν (ἃ γὰρ εἶδον καὶ ὧν ἥσθοντο οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρῶτον ταῦτα κατωνόμασαν, δευτέρως δὲ τὰ τῇ φύσει μὲν πρῶτα, αἰσθήσει δὲ δεύτερα), εἰκότως ἃ ταῖς λέξεσι

Augustine from a basically Peripatetic reading to a fully Neoplatonic one would not have been all that great.

¹⁸³ "The harmony of Plato and Aristotle was accepted to a larger or smaller extent by all commentators in the Neoplatonist tradition, and the great bulk of the ancient commentators, Christians included, are in that tradition" (Sorabji: 1990, 3).

πρῶτα κατωνομάσθη (ἔστι δὲ τὰ αἰσθητὰ καὶ τὰ ἄτομα), πρῶτας οὐσίας ἔθετο. ὥστε ὡς πρὸς τὰς σημαντικὰς λέξεις πρῶται οὐσία αἱ ἄτομοι αἰσθηταί, ὡς δὲ πρὸς τὴν φύσιν πρῶται αἱ νοηταί. πρόκειται δὲ κατὰ τὰς σημαντικὰς λέξεις τὰ γένη τῶν ὄντων διελεῖν, αἱ δὲ σημαντικαὶ πρῶτως εἰσὶν τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀτόμων οὐσιῶν.

(Porphyry, *in Cat.* 91,19-27)

In these passages there are two main proposals: firstly, that the *Categories* is not concerned with things but rather with words insofar as they signify things, and secondly, that words are applied primarily to sensible things¹⁸⁴ and only secondarily to intelligible things. It is the second proposal which is central for making the *Categories* acceptable to Platonists, though the first is necessary so as to make the second relevant.

0258 This interpretation by Porphyry crucially meant, due to an acceptance of the unity of Platonism and Aristotelianism¹⁸⁵, that “...Aristotle’s logic and a wide selection of his other texts became a standard prerequisite for Platonic studies in the Neoplatonist schools...” (Sorabji: 1990, 2). Aristotelian logic, in particular, but by no means exclusively, had come to be seen as an introduction leading to the ‘Greater Mysteries’ of Plato¹⁸⁶, while commentators such as Ammonius (*in Cat.* 6, 9 ff.) saw the study of the *Categories* as a necessary initial step on the path which would eventually lead one to the Neoplatonic One.

0259 To return to Porphyry’s making the *Categories* acceptable to Platonists, what is particularly problematic in Aristotle for a Neoplatonist such as Augustine is that Aristotle argues that what is less universal, in terms of substance, is prior

¹⁸⁴ This assertion will be seen to have no small importance in understanding the relation of Augustine’s view of language acquisition to his epistemology (v. *inf.* § 8.1.3).

¹⁸⁵ Cf. the accreditation to Porphyry of *On the School of Plato and Aristotle Being One* and *On the Difference between Plato and Aristotle* (these may be different names for the same work).

¹⁸⁶ In Greek circles there was established a virtual curriculum. However, in the Latin West, due to lack of access to material, scholars such as Ambrose and Augustine had to read such texts that did become available in whatever order they could (Cf. Sorabji: 1990, 6).

ontologically to that which is more universal. Substance which is particular is, therefore, primary (*cat.* 2a11 ff.) and unless particular substances exist, neither can anything else.

μη οὐσῶν οὖν τῶν πρώτων οὐσιῶν ἀδύνατον τῶν ἄλλων τι εἶναι·

(Aristotle, *cat.* 2b6)

Therefore, universal substances, or Platonic Forms, cannot exist apart from their instances and so Aristotle clearly seems to argue that the Theory of Forms, whereby the universal *F* is the cause of the being of the particular *f*, is flawed.

0260 Porphyry approaches this issue by giving a very specific interpretation to the purpose of the *Categories*. Porphyry rejects the supposition that the *Categories* is a work concerned with metaphysics or ontology, namely the classification of simple entities by their genera, but rather proposes that it is concerned with language and with simple terms and the concepts they stand for. According to Porphyry's interpretation then, the *Categories* considers substances and their properties by means of the logical analysis of the language by which they are referred to. The text was seen as the primary text in the study of Platonism as it introduces the study of ontology via those things that are initially known to humans (i.e. sensible entities), and not those which are primary in being (Porphyry, *in Cat.* 91.20 ff.).

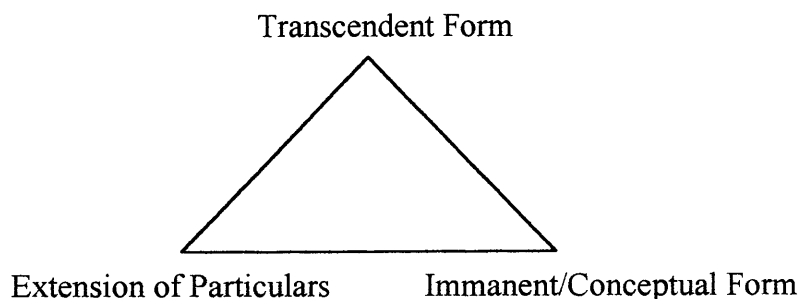
0261 According to Porphyry, Aristotle speaks of particular substances as being primary due to the fact that he is considering significant expressions, which are applied primarily to sensibles and only secondarily to the universals which are predicated of them. This, however, does not entail that a particular substance is in itself ontologically prior to its universal, for in matter of fact the whole class of a universal is prior to any particular instantiation of it. That is to say, a universal is

secondary to its extension, not to an individual particular which falls within this extension. That particular substances are not prior to universals reveals the main thrust of the argument, namely, that the universal is secondary to its extension.

...δεῖ...εὖ εἰδέναι, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄτομος οὐσία ὁ εἷς τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀλλ' οἱ καθ' ἕκαστον ἄνθρωποι πάντες, ἐξ ὧν καὶ κοινῇ κατηγορούμενος ἄνθρωπος ἐπενοήθη...ἀ δὴ καὶ αἷτια τοῖς κοινῇ κατηγορούμενοις ἐστὶ τοῦ εἶναι· παρὰ γὰρ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον [οὐκ]...ἄνθρωπον...ἐστὶ νοῆσαι. εἰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον αἰσθήσεως ἐπὶ τὸ κοινῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ ἀφικνούμεθα, ὅπερ οὐκέτι τόδε τι νοοῦμεν ἀλλὰ τοιόνδε, εἰ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον ἀναιρεθῇ ζῶα, οὐκέτι οὐδὲ τὸ κοινῇ κατηγορούμενον κατ' αὐτῶν ἔσται.
(Porphyry, *in Cat.* 90,30-91,5)

Universals therefore are conceptual entities which cannot exist separately from their extension. Such an interpretation allows of a Neoplatonist ontology: particulars make up the extension of conceptual universals, while the Platonic Forms are the causes of both the particulars and the conceptual universals.

(D9)



0262 Such an interpretation will be seen to be fruitful in considering Augustine's theory of language (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6) for although the transcendent Forms play a significant role in the explanation of knowledge and verification, they are unsatisfactory items of reference for any ordinary theory of language¹⁸⁷.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Strange: 1992, 11-12.

5.2.1.2.4. Aristotle's *de Interpretatione*.

0263 The *de Interpretatione* was understood by both the Neoplatonists, and by other commentators, as being concerned with assertion. It was studied after the *Categories*, which was taken to concern single terms, and before the *Prior Analytics*, which concerned syllogisms.

0264 It is at the beginning of the *de Interpretatione* that Aristotle comes closest to giving a theory of meaning. However the passage in which this occurs is extremely compressed and, for this reason, tends towards obscurity. This would appear to be the case due to the fact that Aristotle, to some extent, assumes an awareness of several issues raised in Plato's *Cratylus* concerning the place of language in an attempt to understand truth and falsity. Aristotle briefly proposes a scheme whereby the relation of words to thought and thought to reality can be understood¹⁸⁸, and then moves on to the more pressing discussion of various types of statements, their properties and relationships.

0265 Ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθημάτων σύμβολα, καὶ τὰ γραφόμενα τῶν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ. καὶ ὥσπερ οὐδὲ γράμματα πᾶσι τὰ αὐτά, οὐδὲ φωναὶ αἱ αὐταί· ὧν μέντοι ταῦτα σημεῖα πρώτων, ταῦτα πᾶσι παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ ὧν ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα πράγματα ἤδη ταῦτά.
(Aristotle, *int.* 16a3-8)

Words are conventional symbols (σύμβολα) of affections in the soul

(τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθημάτων), and yet are also evidence of, or indicate

(σημεῖα), the affections which they conventionally stand for. That is to say, Aristotle proposes a purely conventional relation between word and affection whilst also

¹⁸⁸ Aristotle proposes a general scheme which can be seen to be implicitly proposed in the *Cratylus* (v. *sup.* 0243-0248).

proposing a relation between them whereby the word is a proof that there is a particular affection in the soul.

0266 The standard meaning of the Greek ‘σύμβολον’ was ‘token’ or ‘tally’ (cf.LSJ). Aristotle would appear to have chosen this term to apply to words due to the fact that their meanings are fixed by convention, just as a token or tally depends upon an agreement between those for whom the token or tally is to stand. Something only becomes a symbol when it is set up as one by convention; and it is clearly with this in mind that Aristotle defines a name as a sound significant by convention.

Ὅνομα μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ φωνὴ σημαντικὴ κατὰ συνθήκη...
(Aristotle, *int.*16a19)

Nothing is a name by nature, and something only becomes a name when it becomes a symbol:

τὸ δὲ κατὰ συνθήκην, ὅτι φύσει τῶν ὀνομάτων οὐδέν ἐστιν,
ἀλλ’ ὅταν γένηται σύμβολον.
(Aristotle, *int.*16a26-28)

0267 Aristotle standardly refers to spoken/written words as σύμβολα (arbitrary instituted marks with significance) not as σημεῖα and would appear to be reluctant to apply the term ‘σημεῖα’ directly to words. Spoken words are σύμβολα of the affections of the soul and are not the same for all human beings; they are conventional. Therefore, Aristotle employs the term ‘σύμβολα’ to focus in this context on the conventional aspect of words, while using ‘σημεῖα’ to reflect them in their aspect as pointing to something beyond themselves.

0268 The term ‘σύμβολον’, especially when applied in a philosophical context, at that time appears to have been more neutral than ‘σημεῖον’ - although both had been used in the Hippocratic tradition with the technical sense of ‘symptom’.

0269 Aristotle states (*int.* 16a5) that the affections of the soul are likenesses

Also, there are the following stages from psychological state to reality:

B τὸ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ → ὁμοίωμα → τὸ πρᾶγμα
 πάθημα

0274 Of these stages, it will be most fruitful, in considering Augustine's model of language, to look to the psychological state¹⁸⁹. That is to say, the affection in the soul which is signified (τὸ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ πάθημα) and which is a likeness (ὁμοίωμα) of the object. The above model of language, although similar in a number of ways to that of Augustine, is not equivalent to Augustine's which is largely Stoic in form (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.5). However, the status of Aristotle's psychological states within the model and their ontological 'likeness' to the object in reality upon which they depend are extremely significant in Augustine's process of syncretising Stoic semantics with Platonic metaphysics.

0275 'Affections of the soul' seem most plausibly to include thoughts or concepts¹⁹⁰ and although Aristotle does not actually state that thoughts/concepts are understood as falling under the term 'affections', thought, and memory, are said to occur in that part of the soul which can be affected:

...οὐ μνημονεύομεν δέ, ὅτι τοῦτο μὲν ἀπαθές, ὁ δὲ παθητικὸς
 νοῦς φθαρτός

(Aristotle, *de an.* 430a24)

It would, therefore, seem reasonable that 'affections of the soul' in the *de Interpretatione* at the least include thoughts. Indeed, names and verbs are directly compared to thoughts.

¹⁸⁹ Also of significance is that Aristotle appears to suggest a semiotic relation whereby a word stands for a psychological state, or affection, according to a model of equivalence (σύμβολον), but also as a proof (σημεῖον) that one has a particular affection in mind (0265-0270). This is to say, on one level a word stands *for* an affection, and on another it is a sign *that* one has the particular affection in mind. This approach is of importance in considering Augustine's view on the evidential nature of words and will be considered below (§ 8 and § 9).

¹⁹⁰ For a fuller discussion of this cf. Whitaker: 1996, 13-17.

τὰ μὲν οὖν ὀνόματα αὐτὰ καὶ τὰ ῥήματα ἔοικε τῷ ἄνευ
συνθέσεως καὶ διαιρέσεως νοήματι...

(Aristotle, *int.* 16a13-14)

Also, both speaker and hearer register a word in their thought.

αὐτὰ μὲν οὖν καθ' αὐτὰ λεγόμενα τὰ ῥήματα ὀνόματά ἐστι καὶ
σημαίνει τι, - ἴστησι γὰρ ὁ λέγων τὴν διάνοιαν, καὶ ὁ ἀκούσας
ἠρέμησεν, - ἀλλ' εἰ ἔστιν ἢ μὴ οὕτω σημαίνει· οὐ γὰρ τὸ εἶναι
ἢ μὴ εἶναι σημείον ἐστὶ τοῦ πράγματος, οὐδ' ἐὰν τὸ ὄν εἴπῃς
ψιλόν. αὐτὸ μὲν γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστιν, προσσημαίνει δὲ σύνθεσιν
τινα, ἣν ἄνευ τῶν συγκειμένων οὐκ ἔστι νοῆσαι.

(Aristotle, *int.* 16b19-25)

0276 As regards the relationship from thought to reality it is necessary to understand what it is that Aristotle understands by 'ὁμοίωμα'.

0277 How thoughts are understood as likenesses of things is developed along lines similar to those in which Aristotle theorises on perception. In perception the organ of perception is potentially that which the thing perceived already is in actuality, and becomes like it when it perceives it (Aristotle, *de an.* 418a3ff.). Thoughts occur in a similar way.

εἰ δὴ ἐστὶ τὸ νοεῖν ὥσπερ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι, ἢ πάσχειν τι ἂν εἴη
ὑπο τοῦ νοητοῦ ἢ τι τοιοῦτον ἕτερον. ἀπαθὲς ἄρα δεῖ εἶναι,
δεκτικὸν δὲ τοῦ εἶδους καὶ δυνάμει τοιοῦτον ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦτο,
καὶ ὁμοίως ἔχειν, ὥσπερ τὸ αἰσθητικὸν πρὸς τὰ αἰσθητά, οὕτω
τὸν νοῦν πρὸς τὰ νοητά.

(Aristotle, *de an.* 429a13-18)

The process is such that the actual form of the object is taken on by the mind of the thinker, so that this same form is common both to the object and to the thinker - there is an analogy between the sensible form of an object and the thinkable form, that is to say, the senses receive the form of an object *qua* sensible, and the mind receives the form *qua* thinkable. Therefore, a 'likeness' of the object is in the mind. The mind is affected by the object such that it receives its form.

0278 Confusion may result from the supposition that when Aristotle speaks of 'likenesses', he refers to images; as images may be different for different people while

forms will not be. Aristotle specifically states that they are not images, but are thoughts, and thought is formally identical with its object. Indeed, he even clarifies this by stating that while thoughts are not images, some thoughts may involve them.

τὰ γὰρ φαντάσματα ὥσπερ αἰσθήματά ἐστι, πλὴν ἄνευ ὕλης.
ἔστι δ' ἡ φαντασία ἕτερον φάσεως καὶ ἀποφάσεως· συμπλοκὴ
γὰρ νοημάτων ἐστὶ τὸ ἀληθὲς ἢ ψεῦδος· τὰ δὲ πρῶτα νοήματα
τίνι διοίσει τοῦ μὴ φαντάσματα εἶναι; ἢ οὐδὲ τᾶλλα
φαντάσματα, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄνευ φαντασμάτων.

(Aristotle, *de an.* 432a9-14)

Following this interpretation, it is clear that thoughts are ‘the same for all’ because when one thinks of an object one’s mind takes on its form; and this form is dependent on what the object essentially is and must therefore be the same for everyone.

0279 Following on from this it may now be useful to say something about the relationship given, in the works of Aristotle, between words and things. This important relationship is referred to most notably in *Sophistici Elenchi* (165a6ff.), while also occurring throughout the *de Interpretatione* where “... verbs are defined as being signs of a certain sort of thing (16b7, 10); the verb ‘to be’, unlike other words, is not a sign of a thing (16b22ff.); in chapter 7, assertions are classified according to the kinds of things which they take as subject (17a38ff.); [and where] the truth of utterances matches things (19a33)” (Whitaker:1996, 20).

0280 An apparent contradiction in Aristotle’s analysis arises when words are described as symbols not for thoughts but for things in the *Sophistici Elenchi*.

ἐπεὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα διαλέγεσθαι φέροντας,
ἀλλὰ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἀντὶ τῶν πραγμάτων χρώμεθα ὡς συμβόλοις,
τὸ συμβαῖνον ἐπὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων
ἡγούμεθα συμβαίνειν, καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ψήφων τοῖς λογιζομένοις.
(Aristotle, *SE* 165a6-10)

0281 Of concern to this apparent contradiction and to Aristotle’s theory of signification/meaning in general is the, much debated, reference to affections of the soul as “...ὧν μέντοι ταῦτα σημεία πρῶτων” (*int.* 16a6). The most plausible

interpretation of this phrase¹⁹¹ would seem to be that suggested by Ammonius, whereby ‘primary’ qualifies ‘affections of the soul’. Words then are signs primarily of affections of the soul and secondarily of things¹⁹². Therefore, according to Ammonius’ interpretation, affections of the soul are intermediaries between words and things: words signify affections directly and things indirectly¹⁹³.

0282 With regard to what it actually means for words to primarily signify affections and secondarily things, it is important to remember that affections/thoughts are formal likenesses of things. “The thinker takes on the form of the thing, so that the form is present both in the thing and in his mind, just as the same impression might be shared by two wax tablets¹⁹⁴. If words are signs of thoughts, and thoughts are exact copies of things, it would seem to follow inevitably that words would also be signs of things. Of course, they are only signs of things by virtue of the fact that the words are already in the first place signs of thoughts, which are in turn copies of the things”

(Whitaker:1996, 22).¹⁹⁵

0283 It should be made clear that, in Ammonius’ account, words signify thoughts immediately and directly, and signify things only indirectly, through thoughts as intermediaries (Ammonius, *in Int.* 24.7-9). In Aristotle thoughts are identical in form with things; words express thoughts which are likenesses of things. It is for this

¹⁹¹ There is, in addition to the debate over the interpretation of this phrase, a textual dispute. For a presentation of the other two main interpretations which I do not present here cf. Kretzmann: 1974, 3-21; Pepin: 1985, 22-44; and Belardi: 1981, 79-83.

¹⁹² Ammonius, *in Aristotelis de Interpretatione Commentarius*, A. Busse (ed.), *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, IV (Berlin, 1897), 17ff.

¹⁹³ Ammonius goes on to use this interpretation to deny the necessity for positing an intermediate item between the thought and the thing, namely, the Stoic λεκτόν. Augustine’s position in respect to this will be considered below (§ 5.2.1.2.5.5).

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *de an.* 412b.

¹⁹⁵ This point is important in understanding Augustine’s consideration of hierarchies based on epistemic priority with regards to things and signs (v. *inf.* § 6.2).

reason, and not because thoughts stand as intermediaries, that words are signs first of thoughts and secondarily of things¹⁹⁶.

0284 Aristotle's theory of meaning signalled an advance in the philosophy of language in the ancient world and a number of the key distinctions made are of importance in Augustine's approach to meaning. There are four of these distinctions: firstly, that words are both symbols and are, therefore, equivalent to thought, and are also signs and are, therefore, proofs of thought. The importance of this distinction in the DM will be discussed in due course (*v. inf.* §8 and §9). Secondly, words are held to signify thoughts; and thirdly, words, in signifying thoughts, do so primarily and only signify things secondarily. Augustine's position relating to these distinctions is crucial to understanding his approach to meaning and will be considered in the following section (§ 5.2.1.2.5.5), which will discuss his theory in relation to Stoicism. Fourthly, Aristotle held that thoughts were the likenesses of things, and that these likenesses were the same for everyone. This final distinction must now briefly be discussed in relation to the thought of Augustine, for the issues it raises for Augustine's theory of meaning are not trivial.

0285 As noted above (0276-0278), for Aristotle thoughts were likenesses of things and this relationship was most apparent in his approach to perception and to concept formation based on perception. The approach from the perspective of perception and its place in concept formation will also be seen to be somewhat useful in considering Augustine, for his theory of perception¹⁹⁷ is, in the ways which are relevant to this study, very similar to that of Aristotle.

¹⁹⁶ For a fuller discussion of this point cf. Whitaker: 1996, 22.

¹⁹⁷ Augustine's theory of sense-perception is more fully discussed by O'Daly: 1986, 80-105 (for other sources of discussion cf. *ib.* 80 n.1). The following brief discussion is much dependent on O'Daly.

0286 Sense-perception in Augustine is specifically the perception of the images of bodies and these images are likenesses (*imagines*)¹⁹⁸ of those bodies.

Cum...de his, quae aliquando sensimus, quaeritur, non iam res ipsas, sed imagines ab eis impressas¹⁹⁹ memoriaeque mandatas loquimur...ita illas imagines in memoriae penetralibus rerum ante sensarum quaedam documenta gestamus...

(39)

A. meministine tandem urbis Mediolanensis?

E. ualde memini.

A. nunc ergo, quia eius facta mentio est, recordaris, quanta et qualis sit?

E. recordor sane ac nihil recentius atque integrius.

A. nunc ergo, cum oculis eam non uideas, animo uides.

E. ita est.

A. meministi, credo etiam, quanto spatio terrarum nunc a nobis longe absit.

E. ita et hoc memini.

A. uides itaque animo etiam ipsam locorum distantiam.

E. uideo.

A. cum igitur anima tua hic sit ubi corpus, nec ultra spatium eius porrigatur, ut superior ratio demonstrabat, unde fit, ut illa omnia uideat?

E. per memoriam hoc fieri puto, non quod illis locis sit praesens.

A. imagines ergo illorum locorum memoria continentur.

E. ita sentio; nam et quid nunc ibi agatur ignoro; quod utique non ignorarem, si animus meus usque ad ea loca porrigeretur praesentiaque sentiret.

A. uerum mihi uideris dicere; sed certe istae imagines corporum sunt.

(*an. quant.* 8)

0287 These images are not corporeal but rather are the forms²⁰⁰ of the objects, which are perceived incorporeally²⁰¹. There are in fact four forms involved in the perceptual process: the form of the perceived object; the form effected in the sense, which is caused by the form being induced in it by means of the form in the object; the form which occurs in the memory; and the form in the mind (*trin.* 11.16). There is a similar relation presented in the *de musica* (6.22) concerning number.

¹⁹⁸ The term '*imago*' is that which appears in the *de magistro*, yet '*phantasia*' occurs frequently elsewhere. For a discussion of the difference between Augustine's and the Stoic's usage of '*phantasia*' cf. O'Daly: 1987, 106-7.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. the image of an impression of a seal upon wax in *trin.* 11.3 - an similar use of this analogy most significantly occurs in Plato, *Tht.* 191a-195b and in Aristotle, *de an.* 424a.

²⁰⁰ cf. eg. '*forma*', *civ.* 11.27; '*species*', *trin.* 11 *passim*.

(D11)

	<i>trin.</i>	<i>mus.</i>
(1)	<i>ab specie corporis exoritur</i>	<i>sonantes numeri</i>
(2)	<i>ea quae fit in sensu cernentis et ab hac</i>	<i>occursores numeri</i>
(3)	<i>ea quae fit in memoria et ab hac</i>	<i>recordabiles numeri</i>
(4)	<i>ea quae fit in acie cogitantis</i>	<i>iudiciales numeri</i>

0288 There is, therefore, a formal continuum from object, through sense, through memory, to intellect and this continuum is made possible by the rationality of the human mind and by the ‘rationality’ of the impressions (cf. *ord.* 2.32-33). As noted in the discussion of Aristotle on ‘likenesses’ (0277), there is an analogy between the sensible form of an object and the thinkable form, i.e. *qua* sensible and *qua* thinkable. This is to say, what makes an object perceptible is the fact that it is formed, and what makes the mind perceive the object is that it is of such a nature as to grasp forms because forms are, in essence, thinkable or intelligible.

0289 This picture of sense-perception is not of primary relevance in this discussion and for this reason only those factors which are of concern will be highlighted. What is of interest concerning forms in objects is that they would appear to be best described as immanent forms which are, in the manner described and for the reasons discussed, accessible to the human mind. The causes of the objects being formed are the Transcendent Forms²⁰² of the Platonic tradition and it is these Forms which

²⁰¹ It should be noted that in Augustine’s terminology images are identified with forms, whereas in discussion of Aristotle it was important to distinguish forms and images (v. *sup.* 0278).

²⁰² Via God for the Christian Augustine.

function as standards by which one may judge one's perceptions of objects (cf. *div. qu.* 46; *vera rel.* 58)²⁰³.

0290 The forms of objects perceived by the senses are stored in the memory and are held there to be accessed as the raw material for thought. The process involved in this storing of formal impressions in the memory is achieved through a kind of memory trace.

0291 Through direct experience of objects a likeness or immaterial trace is left in the memory, which Augustine likens to a great store-house (*conf.* 10.12-15) or to a stomach (*trin.* 12.23; *conf.* 10.21). These likenesses are recalled by the will's application of the mind's attention (*trin.* 9.16). As with acts of perception so too is there a similar process involved in memory acts: just as in perception the sensible object produces a form within the senses, so inwardly is an articulate image produced by the latent memory image. In vision there is the "*species visibilis qua sensus corporis formabatur, et eius similitudo quae fiebat in sensu formato*" (*trin.* 11.6), while memory acts occur "*cum constet ex corporis similitudine quam memoria tenet, et ex ea quae inde formatur in acie recordantis animi; tamen sic una et singularis apparet*" (*trin.* 11.6).

0292 The will therefore turns one's attention towards these latent memory images, actualising them as articulate memory images. These memory images are, in so far as memory of past perceived objects is concerned, a formal representation of the object once seen and one, as it were, looks at this image when recalling its object. In this way memory preserves particulars and general categories for recall (*conf.* 10.13), and through accessing these images one is able to not simply access specific memories but

²⁰³ The access to the Transcendent Forms via the intellect will be considered in due course (v. *inf.* § 9); as will the related issue as to whether all 'affections', as in Aristotle, are the same for everyone and what this means for the problems concerning knowledge acquisition through language presented in the DM.

can rather employ these images in broader psychological processes such as using one's imagination so as to accumulate memories from this stock of images (*trin.* 11.13). Indeed, in such a way can one access and enable linguistic creativity, in that one can hear a string of words, in a sentence, in a combination one has never heard before and be able to conceptualise what is talked about (*trin.* 11.14).

0293 In addition to these notions gained through sensory experience, memory also has access to intelligible items. These items do not depend upon images but are rather directly available to the mind in some sort of latent manner (*conf.* 10.16-19). These intelligible items are unchangeable '*rationes*' (*trin.* 12.23) which underlie particular objects and which can only be fleetingly grasped by the human mind. In this sense it is clear that these intelligible items are Transcendent Forms.

0294 Memory is crucial to Augustine's epistemology and this is so to such an extent that within its bounds lie everything which the human mind can think of or about. There is much yet to be considered concerning memory in the argument of the DM which will have to be considered in due course (*v. inf.* § 9.3.1). For present purposes it is sufficient to say that concept formation, and accessing, in Augustine's thought depends to a large extent upon images which are formal with regards to their ontological status (*v. sup.* 0288). In addition to these concepts, the remaining concepts which are purely intellectual in nature (i.e. the Transcendent Forms, *v. sup.* 0293) are also formal, but are latent in the memory, as it were, and are constantly available to the mind for accessing as actualised intelligibles.

0295 The formal ontological basis for psychological events will be seen to be of central concern to, perhaps, the most difficult question concerning Augustine's approach to language: namely, what is it that words signify? It is this question which

will now be discussed, together with the question which is implicit in any answer to what they signify: namely, how do words signify the items which they signify?

5.2.1.2.5. Stoicism on Meaning.

0296 The following discussion of the Stoics will necessarily be brief and will focus singularly on those areas which are of importance in a consideration of Augustine's theory of language. The issues in the Stoic approach to language are many and complex²⁰⁴. The following interpretation is one which best fits that which Augustine appears to follow in the DM and in his approach to language in general.

0297 The Stoics regarded the study of 'the correctness of names' as beyond the wise man's area of research.

περί τ' ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος, ὅπως διέταξαν οἱ νόμοι ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔργοις, οὐκ ἂν ἔχειν εἰπεῖν. δυοῖν δ' οὔσαιν συνηθείαιν ταῖν ὑποπιπτούσαιν τῇ ἀρετῇ, ἥ μὲν τί ἑκαστόν ἐστι τῶν ὄντων σκοπεῖ, ἥ δὲ τί καλεῖται.

(Diogenes Laertius, 7.83)

However, what was of concern was the study of what each thing is and of what each thing is called. That is to say, in accordance with Plato and as further developed by Aristotle, the Stoics were greatly concerned with the study of reality and the relation to it of truth and falsehood as, particularly, mediated through language.

5.2.1.2.5.1. Division of speech.

0298 The Stoics clarified the fact that utterance (φωνή) and speech (λέξις) differ in that while vocal sound (ἦχος) is also an utterance, only articulated sound (ἐναρθρον)

²⁰⁴ Cf. Long: 1971; Frede: 1974; Rist: 1978; Brunschwig (ed.): 1978; Butts & Hintikka (edd.): 1976.

can be correctly classified as speech. Further to this, speech also differs from language (λόγος) in that language is *always* significant (σημαντικός), while speech may be without significance (e.g. in the meaningless ‘words’ βλίτυρι or σκινδαψός²⁰⁵). Saying (τὸ λέγειν) differs from vocalisation (τὸ προφέρεσθαι) for utterances are vocalised, while states of affairs (τὰ πράγματα) are said. States of affairs are described as ‘sayables’ (λεκτά).

διαφέρει δὲ φωνὴ καὶ λέξις, ὅτι φωνὴ μὲν καὶ ὁ ἥχος ἐστὶ, λέξις δὲ τὸ ἔναρθρον μόνον. λέξις δὲ λόγου διαφέρει, ὅτι λόγος αἰεὶ σημαντικός ἐστι, λέξις δὲ καὶ ἀσήμαντος, ὡς ἡ βλίτυρι, λόγος δὲ οὐδαμῶς διαφέρει δὲ καὶ τὸ λέγειν τοῦ προφέρεσθαι· προφέρονται μὲν γὰρ αἱ φωναί, λέγεται δὲ τὰ πράγματα, ἃ δὴ καὶ λεκτὰ τυγχάνει.

(Diogenes Laertius, 7.57)

0299 Language is, therefore, distinguished from utterance (vocal sound) and speech in that it is significant: language is significant speech, speech is articulated utterance, utterance is vocal sound. Significance is not reducible to the sound made when uttering words, phrases, or sentences: uttering (and speech) is vocalised, but saying is meaningful, or significant.

0300 The utterance of an animal is air struck by an impulse (ῥοπή), but that of a human is articulated and issues from thought. Utterance is a body, for every action is a body and an utterance sent forth from a speaker to a hearer is an action²⁰⁶ (Diogenes Laertius, 7.55-56).

²⁰⁵ These words are not simply inarticulate cries but are part of the Greek phonetic system and are as such articulate speech, only they lack meaning.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Speech as action in Plato’s *Cratylus* (387b) - v. *sup.* 0234.

5.2.1.2.5.2. Truth.

0301 There was a debate concerning the proper study of truth: some applied truth or falsehood to the ‘signification’, others to the ‘utterance’, others to the ‘motion of thought’. The Stoics held the first opinion and said that three things were linked together: that which is signified (the signification - τὸ σημαίνόμενον), that which signifies (the signifier - τὸ σημαῖνον), and that which possesses (the name bearer/the subject - τὸ τυγχάνον).

- (i) The ‘signifier’ is the utterance (φωνή), such as [Dion].
- (ii) The ‘signification’ is the actual state of affairs (τὸ πρᾶγμα) indicated (δηλούμενον) by the utterance. We grasp the ‘signification’ as it subsists in accordance with our thought (τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένον διανοίᾳ). Foreigners don’t understand the ‘signification’ although they hear the utterance.
- (iii) The ‘subject’ is that which exists externally, such as <Dion> himself.

0302 The utterance and the subject are bodies (σώματα); and the state of affairs, signified (σημαίνόμενον) and ‘sayable’ (λεκτόν), is incorporeal. It is the state of affairs, signified and sayable, which is true or false.

...οἱ μὲν περὶ τῷ σημαίνομένῳ τὸ ἀληθές τε καὶ ψεῦδος ὑπεστήσαντο, οἱ δὲ περὶ τῇ φωνῇ, οἱ δὲ περὶ τῇ κινήσει τῆς διανοίας. καὶ δὴ τῆς μὲν πρώτης δόξης προεστήκασιν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς τρία φάμενοι συζυγεῖν ἀλλήλοις, τὸ τε σημαίνόμενον καὶ τὸ σημαῖνον καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον, ὧν σημαῖνον μὲν εἶναι τὴν φωνήν, οἷον τὴν Δίων, σημαίνόμενον δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς δηλούμενον καὶ οὗ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένον διανοίᾳ, οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι οὐκ ἐπαίουσι καίπερ τῆς φωνῆς ἀκούοντες, τυγχάνον δὲ τὸ ἐκτὸς ὑποκείμενον, ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ὁ Δίων. τούτων δὲ δύο μὲν εἶναι σώματα, καθάπερ τὴν φωνήν καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον, ἓν δὲ ἄσώματον, ὥσπερ τὸ σημαίνόμενον πρᾶγμα, καὶ λεκτόν, ὅπερ ἀληθές τε γίνεται ἢ ψεῦδος.

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12)

0303 What can, therefore, be seen to be of particular importance in any consideration of the Stoic concept of ‘meaning’ is that significance or meaning is not

reducible to the sound made. Also the meaning of a statement such as ‘Socrates writes’ is something different from the particular moving body which could be described in this way: irrespective of whether Socrates is writing, the sentence ‘Socrates writes’ has meaning which will be true in one case and false in the other²⁰⁷.

0304 It should be noted that, as the Sceptics observed, there exists within the Stoic semantic system the difficulty in that what is signified is not necessarily an accurate representation of the world, but only what one believes, with more or less justification, to be such²⁰⁸. This said, it could also be argued that there would also be a difficulty if what is signified were necessarily an accurate representation of the world as this would imply that a statement both meaningful and false would be impossible.

5.2.1.2.5.3. λεκτά.

0305 A λεκτόν is that which subsists in accordance with a ‘rational presentation’ (λογικὴ φαντασία). A ‘rational presentation’ is an impression which can be presented in language.

λεκτὸν δὲ ὑπάρχειν [οἱ Στωικοὶ] φασὶ τὸ κατὰ λογικὴν φαντασίαν ὑφιστάμενον, λογικὴν δὲ εἶναι φαντασίαν καθ’ ἣν τὸ φαντασθὲν ἔστι λόγῳ παραστήσαι.

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.70)

What is described as ‘λογικὴ φαντασία’ is the impression received by rational animals.

0306 In the process from perception to speech the impression is primary, and then secondarily the thought (διάνοια), which can be expressed in language, expresses linguistically what has been experienced. That is to say, one receives an impression

²⁰⁷ Cf. *HP* 1, 199.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Rist: 1994, 26.

from which there arises an expressible thought, and this thought presents in language the experience gained through the impression.

προηγείται γὰρ ἡ φαντασία, εἴθ' ἡ διάνοια ἐκλαλητική
ὑπάρχουσα, ὃ πάσχει ὑπὸ τῆς φαντασίας, τοῦτο ἐκφέρει λόγῳ.
(Diogenes Laertius 7.49)

0307 A thought or rational impression is a particular psychological state of the commanding faculty (which is corporeal). To say that 'sayables subsist in accordance with a rational impression' seems to suggest that because the impression is rational it is sayable. Hence there is an insistence on the connection between thought and language.

0308 If one thinks of Socrates writing, one's commanding-faculty (ἡγεμονικόν) will be disposed in a certain way: that is one's thought or rational impression. The proposition that Socrates is writing is the logical or linguistic correlate of one's thought, the thought as expressed in a sentence²⁰⁹.

0309 For Aristotle (*v. sup.* 0281-0283), nouns and verbs signify thoughts (νοήματα) primarily (προηγουμένως) and immediately (προσεχῶς) and, through thoughts, signify things (πράγματα). Nothing else is required as an intermediary between them, like the λεκτόν proposed by the Stoics.

ἡμᾶς ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης διδάσκει διὰ τούτων, τίνα ἐστὶ τὰ προηγουμένως καὶ προσεχῶς ὑπ' αὐτῶν σημαινόμενα, καὶ ὅτι τὰ νοήματα, διὰ δὲ τούτων μέσων τὰ πράγματα, καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον δεῖ παρὰ ταῦτα ἐπινοεῖν μέσον τοῦ τε νοήματος καὶ τοῦ πράγματος, ὅπερ οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς ὑποτιθέμενοι λεκτὸν ἡξίουσαν ὀνομάζειν.

(Ammonius, *in Int.* 17.24-28)

²⁰⁹ HP 1, 199-200.

5.2.1.2.5.4. Ontology.

0310 The ‘λεκτόν’, ontologically, is distinct from the ‘signifier’ (utterance) and the ‘name-bearer’ (the corporeal entity which the sayable is about) in being incorporeal. A name-bearer is an actual thing which can be *referred* to by the subjects/objects of verbs; whereas the λεκτόν is not a body, but something which can be said *about* a body.

0311 λεκτά as incorporeal items can perhaps best be understood in the fact that meaningful sentences can be false as well as true. This is to say, if Socrates is not writing, the *false* statement that he *is* writing cannot have a corporeal entity, as its meaning. Indeed, while statements make a clear distinction between subjects and predicates (i.e. between ‘Socrates’ and ‘writes’), there is, in actuality, nothing in the physical world which corresponds to this distinction. ‘Socrates’ writing is the material body Socrates ‘disposed in a certain way’ (Seneca, *ep.* 113.23). So, in effect, when saying ‘is writing’ of Socrates, what one actually does is abstract a disposition of that body, and that abstraction, *qua* predication, is how the body which is the <writing-Socrates> can be meaningfully described in language. Therefore, λεκτά can be seen to be abstractions from bodies; and although they are not existent things, sayables do ‘subsist’ within a class of ‘somethings’ (Seneca, *ep.* 58.13-15).

0312 The class of ‘significations’ has predicates as its primary members: they are abstract, incorporeal entities. Predicates are incorporeal and, therefore, are not ‘things’ one can ‘have’ (Simplicius, *in Cat.* 214.24-37). The relationship of a predicate to a subject is parallel to but not reducible to something corporeal *having* something corporeal (Stobaeus 2.97.15-98.6). It is proper to speak of choosing ‘to have’ something good (where something good refers to a body), but one cannot say ‘I

choose to *have* acting prudently’, since ‘acting prudently’ is not a thing which can be had (i.e. not a possible possession) but is a predicate.

0313 The having of, for example, prudence (a corporeal quality) justifies the attribution of the predicate ‘is prudent’ to the person who has prudence. In this way one may see that predicates are *correlates* of things, which is another way of describing their ‘subsistence’. Therefore, language can accurately mirror the world by expressing the corporeal properties of things in the incorporeal form of sayables²¹⁰.

0314 In Stoicism there are bodily qualities (*naturae corporum*)²¹¹ which give rise to motions of the soul which can make enunciations about bodies. These motions have a property peculiar to themselves, which is separate from bodies. When one says ‘wisdom’ one understands a certain corporeal thing, but when one says ‘He is wise’ one speaks *about* a body. It is very different whether one names *it* or speaks *about* it.

“sunt” inquit “naturae corporum, tamquam hic homo est, hic equus; has deinde sequuntur motus animorum enuntiatiui corporum. hi habent proprium quiddam et a corporibus seductum, tamquam uideo Catonem ambulantiem: hoc sensus ostendit, animus credidit. corpus est quod uideo, cui et oculos intendi et animus. dico deinde: “Cato ambulat”. non corpus” inquit “est quod nunc loquor, sed enuntiatiuum quiddam de corpore, quod alii effatum uocant, alii enuntiatum, alii edictum. sic cum dicimus ‘sapientiam’, corporale quiddam intellegimus; cum dicimus ‘sapit’, de corpore loquimur. plurimum autem interest utrum illud dicas an de illo.”

(Seneca, *ep.* 117.13)

This is an exposition of the distinction between ‘goods’ (such as ‘wisdom’) which are corporeal, and the incorporeal sayables expressed by the corresponding verbs (such as ‘to be wise’).

0315 The Stoics can be interpreted as filling in a gap in Aristotle’s theory of meaning. That is to say, if one identifies ‘meanings’ with thoughts, it is extremely unclear as to how distinct acts of thinking can *be* the same meaning for different

²¹⁰ *HP* 1, 202.

²¹¹ ‘*naturae corporum*’ are equated with sentences (‘*hic homo est*’) and what is described by such a sentence is a quality which is in a body.

individuals²¹². By distinguishing rational impressions from λεκτῶν while at the same time connecting them together through the concept of subsistence, the Stoics showed that the meaning of a thought is something which is transferable, through language, across minds. One cannot pass on the content of one's mind, but can tell what one is thinking about.

0316 The Stoics were therefore interested in the nature of verbal signs and with their objects of reference. They thought of signs as pointers; that is to say, "[t]he verbal signs in which [they] are primarily interested are propositions which refer to and indicate a conclusion (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.245)" (Rist:1994, 25). With propositions one is concerned with inferences which are about things or events. The Stoics accordingly give consideration to that which signifies (speech) and to that which is signified (propositions which may be true or false) about some person or event. What is signified is the state of affairs which is shown by the uttered word (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12). These states of affairs are what is said (Diogenes Laertius 7.57) and are sayable (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12).

0317 It should be said that this view of verbal signs appears to leave a gap between the sense of a proposition and the reality to which the proposition refers: for one assents to the content of propositions, yet (following the Sceptical argument) it is impossible to know whether or not one should assent to those propositions formed after grasping presentations about and from the world. So knowledge is unattainable (Rist: 1994, 25). However, the Sceptical position is overstated as although it follows from the Stoic position that there is a question to be asked about whether one should assent or not, it does not follow from this alone that one never should.

²¹² A possible answer to this might be that for an Aristotelian distinct acts of thinking can be the same meaning for different individuals due to the fact that they are the same in form.

0318 What would appear to be supportable from the fragmentary evidence on the Stoic theory of meaning is that it comprised a triadic structure: the signifier, the significate, and the object referred to.

0319 Each linguistic sign indicates a ‘meaning’ which ‘subsists’ with thought. The status of ‘things signified’ is problematic, albeit that it is clear that they were thought of as incorporeal items. These ‘things signified’ exist in a sense, however in Stoic ontology everything which properly exists (thought included) is corporeal. Yet, what this ‘existence’ entails is unclear and the question remains as to whether the ‘things signified’ are purely linguistic items related to a signifier as a mental item or as some sort of item existing independently of the mind²¹³.

5.2.1.2.5.5. Augustine and Stoicism on Meaning.

0320 The primary reason for introducing the above brief discussion of the Stoic position is to elucidate what it is that Augustine holds to be signified in the linguistic act. However, to do this fully it will be useful firstly to clarify some of the main parallels in the thought of Augustine to the Stoic themes described above (0296-0319).

0321 In the DD there would appear to be an adapted version of the Stoic theory of meaning.

(D12)

dicibile

- λεκτόν

dictio

- λέξις σημαντική

(Diogenes Laertius 7.57)

²¹³ Cf. Graeser in Rist: 1978, 81; *HP* 1, 201-202.

Augustine clearly identifies a triadic structure in the signifying process which is at least structurally similar to that of the Stoics.

(D13)

<i>signum/uerbum</i>	-	σημείον
<i>significatio/dicibile</i>	-	σημαινόμενον/λεκτόν
<i>res</i>	-	τυγχάνον

The triadic structure employed by the Stoics and Augustine is all the more similar due to the fact that the signifier (τὸ σημεῖον/*signum*) is clearly a linguistic item²¹⁴.

0322 As has been discussed, the distinction between utterance and signification is clear throughout the thought of Augustine.

cum ergo nomen ipsum sonus et significatio constet, sonus autem ad aures, significatio ad mentem pertineat.
(*an. quant.* 66)

aliter enim dicuntur uerba quae spatia temporum syllabis tenent siue pronuntientur siue cogitentur; aliter omne quod notum est uerbum dicitur animo impressum quamdiu de memoria proferri et definiri potest...
(*trin* 9.15)

0323 The Stoics distinguished between an uttered thought (λόγος προφορικός) and a thought in the mind (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος). This distinction raises questions as to the status of the λεκτόν.

0324 As regards ‘λεκτόν’, as the neuter of the verbal adjective it can mean both ‘what is able to be said’ and ‘what is said’. If one takes the former reading then the

²¹⁴ Cf. Darrell Jackson in that for the ‘sayable’ (τὸ λεκτόν/*dicibile*) both are explained in terms of ‘understanding’ - barbarians do not understand the λεκτόν, the *dicibile* is what is understood in a word and understood in the mind; both are revealed by signs - the λεκτόν is revealed (δηλούμενον) by a sign while things understood (*intellecta*), among which are *dicibilia*, are shown (*demonstrandos*) by giving signs; both are explained by psychological notions - the λεκτόν subsists with our thought (διανοία), and the *dicibile* is held in the mind (*animus*) and attended to by thought (*cogitatio*); both are only expressed via a linguistic sign; and the λεκτόν is signified by sound (ἡ φωνή), the *dicibile* is understood in a word and comes forth in union with a word as a *dictio* (Darrell Jackson: 1972 {1969}, 135).

λεκτόν exist whether it is said or not, while the second reading would mean that it exists only as long as it is expressed.

0325 λεκτά are what ‘subsist in conformity with a rational presentation’ (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.70; Diogenes Laertius 7.51, 7.63). This may suggest that λεκτά exist only insofar as they are expressed in words²¹⁵, which is to say that they have no existence independently of the mind, and yet are *not* thoughts²¹⁶.

0326 What is in fact a correct reading is by no means clear²¹⁷, but what is of importance is that Augustine uses the word ‘*dicibile*’²¹⁸ which clearly means something which is able to be said. The *dicibile* in Augustine is prior to speech and is something in the mind which may be expressed²¹⁹, it is a linguistic correlate to thought. In Ammonius (*in Int.* 17.24-28) the things expressed primarily by words are thoughts and need not involve the Stoic addition of an intermediary between the thought and the object²²⁰ - to understand this there need be a consideration of Aristotelian epistemology, particularly the relation between thought and things as ‘likeness’.²²¹ There may, therefore, be a possible analysis whereby Augustine’s treatment of ‘*dicibile*’ is to a large degree Peripatetic rather than straightforwardly being Stoic.

0327 Indeed, it may be argued that the terminology employed in the DD involves a fusion of Peripatetic and Stoic theories. As Nuchelmans argues, “[it would appear

²¹⁵ Cf. Graeser, in Rist: 1978, 89

²¹⁶ A possible answer may lie in the potential/actual distinction suggested in *HP* 1, 201-202. What is of particular concern to the above discussion is, however, Augustine’s view of the status of the ‘sayable’ rather than that of the Stoics.

²¹⁷ The most convincing interpretation (‘what is able to be said’) is succinctly argued for by Frede, in Everson: 1994, 109-110.

²¹⁸ Cf. Seneca, *ep.* 117.13 for ‘what is said’ (*dictum*), and no reference to sayable as ‘what can be said’.

²¹⁹ John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon* 3.5, takes *dictio*, *dicibile*, *res* to refer to an Aristotelian theory of meaning.

²²⁰ Cf. Stoic attack on Platonic Ideas as collapsing the ‘sense’ of a sign and the associated idea into one (Graeser, in Rist: 1978, 85).

that] the terms *sententia*, *proloquium*, and *eloquium* are characteristic of the Stoic tradition in the Latin West. It may be assumed that they were introduced originally to convey...the terms *lekton* or *dianoia* and *axioma*...But almost from the beginning they seem to have suffered from a certain ambiguity between two senses, that of the thought expressed and that of the linguistic expression indicating the thought, no doubt due to their occurrence in contexts which are typical of the increasing fusion of Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines. The result...was...[the gradual loss of] their original meanings...[which] became synonymous with Peripatetic terms which ousted them altogether” (Nuchelmans: 1973, 115).

0328 In the DD (5.57-58) Augustine makes a distinction between:

D1 *verbum* *dicibile* *dictio* *res*

While in the *de quantitate animae* (32) there is a similar distinction between:

D2 *sonus* *intellectus/notio* *nomen* *res*²²².

0329 What is of particular concern is that in D2 *nomen* consists of sound and signification, sound pertains to the ears and the signification to the mind. Whereas the *intellectus/notio* is parallel with the *dicibile* in that it refers to some sort of mental content before it is expressed in a word. It can be in the mind without being expressed as a word. So too is the *dicibile* in the mind before being spoken and is able to be expressed.

quidquid autem ex uerbo non aures sed animus sentit et ipso animo tenetur inclusum, dicibile uocatur...dicibile...quod in uerbo intelligitur et animo continetur, significat...cum animo [uerba] sensa sunt, ante uocem dicibilia sunt.

(*dial.* 5.50-74)

²²¹ v. *sup.* 0276-0278.

²²² Cf. Boethius, in *P. herm.* (II) p.29,16; p.30,3; p.42,15, it is noted that the Peripatetics held there to be three *orationes*: (i) of letters, (ii) of sounds, (iii) of thoughts - *intellectus*; cf. also p.36,10 where Porphyry is held to have agreed with this.

0330 It is questionable whether the Stoic λεκτόν ever stands for a mental item which *can* be expressed but is not yet expressed. However, the Stoics are in fact presented in one source as having a term for just such an item.

οὔτοι [οἱ Στωικοὶ] τοίνυν τὰ πράγματα τυγχάνοντα καλοῦσι·
τέλος γὰρ τὸ τυχεῖν τούτων· τὰ νοήματα ἐκφορικά· ταῦτα γὰρ
ἐκφέρομεν διὰ τῶν φωνῶν, τὰς φωνὰς λεκτά.

([Ammonius], *in APr.*, SVF 2.236)²²³

The Stoics are here said to have used ἐκφορικόν to designate what was termed νόημα by the Peripatetics. The term ἐκφορικόν therefore seems to mean something very similar to the item designated by *dicibile* - i.e. ‘what is able to be said’. Also, the above passage does seem to suggest a clear distinction between thoughts which can be said and the actual things said.

0331 What can be said with some confidence concerning the issues discussed above (0323-0330) is that there was a certain degree of confusion around in Late Antiquity concerning the differentiation between the position held by the Stoics and that of the Peripatetics.

0332 There is clearly some obscurity in Augustine’s use of ‘*dicibile*’ and to come to any clear interpretation one must attempt to reconcile the essentially Stoic nature of his approach with what appears to be Aristotelian. To do this it will be necessary to attempt to answer a particularly problematic question in Augustine’s approach to meaning: namely, what is it that is signified by words. In so doing, it will be possible to determine whether the fact that the use of ‘*dicibile*’ necessitates that it is in some way equivalent to thought and is therefore more Aristotelian than Stoic. This is due to the fact that the Stoic position was opposed to this conclusion in that the equation of

²²³ Cf. Galen, SVF 2.135 on λόγος ἐνδιόθετος. There is a connection between this and the νόημα προφορικός but can it be said to be a λεκτόν? There may be a parallel similar to Augustine’s *interior verbum* and *dicibile*.

meaning with thought creates problems for their approach to logic, for truth and falsehood is essentially linguistic and is not dependent on thought.

5.2.1.2.5.6. The Signification of Words.

0333 Words are used with the purpose of signifying something.

nemo enim utitur uerbis, nisi aliquid significandi gratia.
(doctr. chr. 1.2)

Signs cause something else, beyond themselves, to come to mind (DD 5.9-10; DDC 2.1), and therefore words are used so as to make something come into another's mind. Words are employed so as to signify one's thoughts to another.

et utique uerba propterea sunt instituta non per quae inuicem se homines fallant sed per quae in alterius quisque notitiam cogitationes suas perferat. uerbis ergo uti ad fallaciam, non ad quod sunt instituta, peccatum est.
(ench. 22)²²⁴

Related to this is that words are used so as to give a sign of the speaker's will (DM 2; DDC 2.4).

0334 Words therefore can be clearly demonstrated as in some sense, conveying thought²²⁵. It is stated in DM (36) that perception of the signification does not occur by hearing the sound uttered, but rather by the cognition of the things signified. This is to say, one grasps the signification of the words by *thinking of* the thing signified. In this sense then Augustine can be seen to employ something akin to the σύμβολον and σημεῖον distinction evident in Aristotle's *de interpretatione* in that words are signs in the sense that they function as evidence for the hearer that one has a particular thought in mind, or that one is thinking about something²²⁶. In this sense then words

²²⁴ Cf. also *Io. ev. tr.* 37.4.

²²⁵ Cf. Locke, *Essay* 2.1 where the proposal that words signify thoughts follows naturally from the fact that thoughts are conveyed by words (Kirwan: 1989, 39).

²²⁶ v. *sup.* 0265-0271.

can be seen to be signs for the hearer of what the speaker has in mind, but this does not answer the question as to what they in fact signify. This is to say, the words signify something for the speaker and it is this that the speaker is thinking of when speaking, but the words also signify something for the hearer who grasps the signification of the words by thinking of the thing signified and is therefore able to know what the speaker has in mind. So although it is an important clarification that words act as a sort of proof²²⁷ of another's will, it should be noted that being a sign of what one is thinking about and being a sign of one's will amounts to the same thing for Augustine. Whenever anyone engages in the mental act of thinking one initiates one's thought by willing it: one actualises a memory trace, or recalls it, by the application of the mind's attention (*trin.* 9.16)²²⁸.

0335 There is clearly a mental element at play in Augustine's theory of meaning and words convey thoughts in the sense that they serve as proofs that a speaker has a certain thought in mind. However, it remains unclear as to whether words signify the thoughts which they are seen to convey or the things which are the objects of those thoughts (as suggested in DM 8; DM 39; and DDC 1.2), or both, or indeed something else altogether.

0336 To clarify this issue, and also the issue as to what the *dicibile* is, will require a close comparison of the discussion in the DM and the fragmentary discussions of the same issues in the Stoic texts, most specifically, as will be argued, those of Diogenes of Babylon.

0337 Perhaps the single most interesting fragment on Stoic linguistic theory in relation to these questions surrounding Augustine's approach to signification and

²²⁷ v. *inf.* § 8 and § 9.

²²⁸ v. *sup.* 0291.

meaning is that forwarded by Sextus Empiricus in a doxographical summary concerning truth (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12)²²⁹.

...οἱ μὲν περὶ τῷ σημαينوμένῳ τὸ ἀληθές τε καὶ ψεῦδος ὑπεστήσαντο, οἱ δὲ περὶ τῇ φωνῇ, οἱ δὲ περὶ τῇ κινήσει τῆς διανοίας, καὶ δὴ τῆς μὲν πρώτης δόξης προεστήκασιν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς τρία φάμενοι συζυγεῖν ἀλλήλοις, τό τε σημαίνον καὶ τὸ σημαῖνον καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον, ὧν σημαῖνον μὲν εἶναι τὴν φωνήν, οἷον τὴν Δίῳ, σημαίνον μὲν αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ ὑπ' αὐτῆς δηλούμενον καὶ οὐ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένῳ διανοίᾳ, οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι οὐκ ἐπαίουσι καίπερ τῆς φωνῆς ἀκούοντες, τυγχάνον δὲ τὸ ἐκτὸς ὑποκείμενον, ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ὁ Δίῳ. τούτων δὲ δύο μὲν εἶναι σώματα, καθάπερ τὴν φωνήν καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον, ἓν δὲ ἄσώματον, ὥσπερ τὸ σημαίνον πρᾶγμα, καὶ λεκτόν, ὅπερ ἀληθές τε γίνεται ἢ ψεῦδος.

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12)

0338 What is of particular significance in this passage is the description of signification. There are three items which participate in this process: the sign or signifier (τὸ σημαῖνον), the signification or that which is signified (τό σημαίνον), and the name-bearer or corporeal item which the sayable is about (τὸ τυγχάνον).

0339 The signifier is relatively straightforward and is the actual word, or sound, (τὴν φωνήν) which is uttered. Language is articulated vocal sound with significance (Diogenes Laertius 7.57). Augustine's definition²³⁰ is virtually identical with this.

... ut uerbum sit, quod cum aliquo significatu articulata uoce profertur ...

(8)

loqui est articulata uoce signum dare.

(*dial.* 5.11)

The actual signifier is the (articulated) vocal sound which requires a signification so as to be a signifier.

²²⁹ This passage was presented above (0302) but it will be useful to cite it here again in full so as to more clearly analyse the key points in context.

λόγος ἀεὶ σημαντικός ἐστι, λέξεις δὲ καὶ ἀσήμαντος, ὥς ἡ
βλίτυρι, λόγος δὲ οὐδαμῶς

(Diogenes Laertius 7.57)

0340 The name-bearer (τό τυγχάνον) is the actual material item existing separately within the world (τὸ ἐκτὸς ὑποκείμενον). Both signifier and name-bearer are corporeal (τούτων δὲ δύο μὲν εἶναι σώματα, καθάπερ τὴν φωνήν καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον). The name-bearer is a body which can be named and spoken about.

“sunt” inquit “naturae corporum, tamquam hic homo est, hic equus... non corpus” inquit “est quod... loquor, sed enuntiatiuum quiddam de corpore... plurimum... interest utrum illud dicas an de illo.”

(Seneca, ep. 117.13)

There are a number of difficulties concerning the item that is described as the name-bearer, and this is also the case for Augustine. There are questions as to the status of universal items (such as ‘man’) and of non-existent items (such as ‘(the now dead) Socrates’). These difficulties, insofar as they relate to the present discussion will be considered in due course (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6). However, for present purposes and so as to give a basic sense of what the name-bearer is, it will suffice to describe the name-bearer as a particular corporeal item, present here and now (<*hic homo*>), which is available to be spoken about (“*hic homo est*”).

0341 The equivalent to the name-bearer in Augustine is, simply put, a *res*. However, as discussed above (0084-0091), there is a more specific and a less specific use of the term ‘*res*’. The sense in which name-bearer is to be taken is that of a thing as concrete entity and Augustine does clearly hold that there are on definite occasions particular concrete items which are what one speaks about. For reasons relating to Augustine’s Platonic approach to his metaphysics and the relation of this metaphysics to his semantics it is rather difficult to forward an unambiguous example of an item such as

²³⁰ v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.

a particular concrete item which one speaks about. In short, when Augustine is discussing *res* with reference to language it is rather difficult to get a clear sense in which the term is being used. This problem relates to both his metaphysics and to his view as to what it is that is signified by a word and will be discussed in due course (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6).

0342 A clear example of a *res* being a particular concrete item which is available to be spoken about occurs in a section of the DM where the multiple levels of signification are under discussion.

... *cum uerbum signum sit nominis et nomen signum sit fluminis et flumen signum sit rei, quae iam uideri potest, ut inter hanc rem et flumen, id est signum eius...*

(9)²³¹

0343 The final semiotic mode introduced by the Stoics is that of signification (τὸ σημαίνον). This term is equivalent to that of ‘*significatio*’ in Augustine. A basic model of equivalence is as follows.

(D14)

τὸ σημαῖνον (ἡ φωνή)	τὸ σημαίνον	τὸ τυγχάνον
<i>signum</i> (uox/sonus)	<i>significatio</i>	<i>res</i>

0344 To more fully appreciate Augustine’s use of ‘*significatio*’ (and the related ‘*dicibile*’) it will be necessary to consider the term as applied in Stoic semantics.

Signification is described at greater length in the Sextus passage than the other two terms in the triad of signifier, signification, and name-bearer.

σημαίνον δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς δηλούμενον
καὶ οὐ ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένου
διανοίᾳ, οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι οὐκ ἐπαίουσι καίπερ τῆς φωνῆς
ἀκούοντες... τούτων δὲ δύο μὲν εἶναι σώματα, καθάπερ τὴν

²³¹ The fact that Augustine labours the point that the thing which the term ‘river’ signifies is a particular item (*hanc rem*) and is available to be seen now (*iam uideri potest*) is not insignificant and reflects the complexity inherent in his approach to signification (v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6).

φωνήν καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον, ἐν δὲ ἀσώματον, ὥσπερ τὸ
σημαινόμενον πρᾶγμα, καὶ λεκτόν, ὅπερ ἀληθές τε γίνεται ἢ
ψεῦδος

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.12)

0345 That which is signified, or the signification, is described as the thing itself (αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα) which is shown (δηλούμενον) by the utterance, *qua* sign, and which subsists in accordance with thought (τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένου διανοίᾳ) and is not understood by those who do not speak the language (in which the sign is expressed). In addition this thing which is signified is incorporeal (ἀσώματον) and is sayable (λεκτόν), which is true or false.

0346 The thing itself is that which is said (Diogenes Laertius 7.57) and is incorporeal and so should more accurately be defined as a state of affairs²³². This state of affairs is, strictly speaking, neither the utterance nor the corporeal name-bearer but rather is an intermediate between the two (Plutarch, *Col.* 1119F; Ammonius, *in Ar. de Int.* 17, 24-8)²³³. When one encounters a body, for example Cato, disposed in a certain way, say, the walking Cato, then one perceives a state of affairs and it is this which is the thing itself. On observing this state of affairs one receives an impression which is rational and can be said (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.70; Diogenes Laertius 7.49). This state of affairs is, as it were, ‘attachable’ to something (Diogenes Laertius 7.64): for example, there is a particular item <Cato> and when this item is disposed in a certain way, <the walking Cato>, then one observes a state of affairs <walking> which is in a sense attachable to Cato. This impression is rational in that it can be stated, that is to

²³² There is an ambiguity in the term ‘state of affairs’ in that it may be a particular state of affairs on one specific occasion and in one specific location or it may be a repeatable one. The actual state of affairs is the referent and as such occurs on one specific occasion in one specific location and may be described as a token. Whereas the sayable represents a state of affairs in a manner which is repeatable and is best described as a type. This ambiguity will be introduced at greater length below (v. *inf.* 0377).

²³³ The fuller significance of this will be discussed below (§ 5.2.1.2.5.6) with reference to *res ipsa* in the DM.

say, one can attach the predicate ‘is walking’ to the subject ‘Cato’ and so assert that Cato is walking. This would seem to be the thrust behind Seneca’s discussion of naming and speaking about something (Seneca, *ep.* 117.13). The senses perceive a state of affairs and show (*ostendit*) it to the mind and this state of affairs is such as to be sayable.

0347 The concept of showing (δηλούμενον) is also of importance to this presentation of signification. This term suggests that there may be a terminological distinction involved here and may also be a hint towards the influence of Diogenes of Babylon on Augustine’s approach to language.²³⁴ Diogenes of Babylon had been to Rome as part of an embassy from Athens in 156/5, accompanying him were Carneades and a Peripatetic. It can be seen from Cicero (*de or.* 2.157-158) that it was Diogenes who introduced to Rome Stoic thinking on dialectic, and therefore on language and signification (Diogenes Laertius 7.43). In addition, much of the terminology seen in Augustine can be found in passages directly attributed to Diogenes (whether Diogenes is devising or simply transmitting these ideas is not of great importance from the perspective of this study). The most obvious is the use of

²³⁴There are a number of factors which may suggest that Diogenes, or doxographical treatments of his work, may have influenced Augustine’s approach to language. The fact that Diogenes was a pupil of Chrysippus of course leaves open the possibility that the linguistic material is ultimately attributable to him. However, Diogenes’ interest in language is indisputable as can be seen in the inclusion among his works of a ἐν τῇ Περί φωνῆς τέχνῃ and a ἐν τῇ διαλεκτικῇ τέχνῃ. Augustine’s own *de dialectica* is largely Stoic in content and the definition of dialectic (“*dialectica est bene disputandi scientia.*” *dial.* 1.1) is suggestive of that cited in Diogenes Laertius as the Stoic definition.

τὴν τε ῥητορικὴν ἐπιστήμην οὕσαν τοῦ εὖ λέγειν...καὶ
τὴν διαλεκτικὴν τοῦ ὀρθῶς διαλέγεσθαι περὶ τῶν ἐν
ἔρωτήσῃ καὶ ἀποκρίσει λόγων· ὅθεν καὶ οὕτως αὐτὴν
ῥίζονται, ἐπιστήμην ἀληθῶν καὶ ψευδῶν καὶ οὐδετέρων.

(Diogenes Laertius 7.42)

This definition is uncredited other than that it is the one given by the Stoics. There is a definition of rhetoric and of dialectic which seems to be used in combination for Augustine’s in DD (cf. Darrell Jackson: 1972 {1969}, 121-2 n.2). Beyond the parallel given in Darrell Jackson, this definition (as seen above) goes on to include the true and false and the idea of dispute concerning these - in this sense the definition is closer to Augustine’s and the terminology used is akin to Cicero’s definition from Diogenes of Babylon.

ex tribus istis clarissimis philosophis, quos Romam venisse dixisti, videsne Diogenem eum fuisse, qui diceret artem se tradere bene disserendi et vera ac falsa diiudicandi, quam verbo Graeco διαλεκτικὴν appellaret? (Cicero, *de or.* 2.157-158).

δηλοῦν (Diogenes Laertius 7.58) and the use of several key linguistic terms and ideas in Diogenes Laertius 7.57 (the whole passage is not directly attributed to Diogenes but the overall context from 7.55 upto and including 7.58, where Diogenes is once more directly referred to, makes clear use of Diogenes' Περὶ φωνῆς (7.55). In relation to dialectic, it is also significant that Augustine uses in the DM the first two examples of non-simple propositions, the hypothetical and the inferential, as attributed to Chrysippus and Diogenes by Diogenes Laertius (7.71). These examples are used so as to determine that all words are significant names (DM 16 - this passage, and the Stoic influences on it, will be discussed at length below, § 5.6.2). Finally, there is the interesting suggestion of Diogenes as a possible source for Augustine's implication (DDC 2.3) that semiotic activity in animals may be instinctive and caused by an irrational impulse (*motus animi*):

ζῶου μὲν ἔστι φωνὴ ἅηρ ὑπὸ ὁρμῆς πεπληγμένος, ἀνθρώπου
δ' ἔστιν ἔναρθρος καὶ ἀπὸ διανοίας ἐκπεμπομένη, ὡς ὁ
Διογένης φησίν...

(Diogenes Laertius 7.55).

0348 The use of δηλοῦν occurs in three significant passages: Sextus Empiricus 8.12; Diogenes Laertius 7.58; Diogenes Laertius 7.62²³⁵. In all of these sections the context involves language and the discussion of signification. Perhaps the most interesting, and suggestive, occurrence is that attributed to Diogenes of Babylon.

ἔστι δὲ προσηγορία μὲν κατὰ τὸν Διογένην μέρος λόγου
σημαῖνον κοινὴν ποιότητα, οἷον Ἄνθρωπος, Ἴππος ὄνομα
δὲ ἔστι μέρος λόγου δηλοῦν ἰδίαν ποιότητα, οἷον Διογένης,
Σωκράτης ῥῆμα δὲ ἔστι μέρος λόγου σημαῖνον ἀσύνθετον

²³⁵ The cognate δηλωτικόν also occurs with reference to signs as used in logical analysis (Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 2.104-106).

κατηγορημα, ὡς ὁ Διογένης, ἢ, ὡς τινες, στοιχεῖον λόγου
ἄπτωτον, σημαῖνόν τι συντακτὸν περί τινος ἢ τινῶν, οἷον
Γράφω, Λέγω...

(Diogenes Laertius 7.58)²³⁶

In this passage it would appear that there is a terminological distinction between the terms applied to common qualities, which signify (σημαῖνον); names applied to particular qualities, which show, or indicate (δηλοῦν); and verbs applied to non-compounded predicates, which once again signify (σημαῖνον). The difficulty with this interpretation is that the later passage from Diogenes Laertius, on ambiguity²³⁷, appears to contradict such a strict terminological interpretation²³⁸.

Ἀμφιβολία δέ ἐστι λέξις δύο ἢ καὶ πλείονα πράγματα
σημαίνουσα λεκτικῶς καὶ κυρίως καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἔθος,
ὥσθ' ἅμα τὰ πλείονα ἐκδέξασθαι κατὰ ταύτην τὴν λέξιν·
οἷον Αὐλήτρις πέπτωκε· δηλοῦνται γὰρ δι' αὐτῆς τὸ μὲν
τοιοῦτον, Οἰκία τρις πέπτωκε, τὸ δὲ τοιοῦτον, Αὐλήτρια
πέπτωκε.

(Diogenes Laertius 7.62)

0349 However, of importance to this discussion is that there is a third and separate source for the application of this term to Stoic considerations on the relation of language to reality (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.12). It would therefore seem reasonable to regard the term 'δηλοῦν', whether technically or semi-technically, as applied by the Stoics as a means of expressing the relation of language to *significata*²³⁹. Words *show* the state of affairs which they signify, and presumably show it to one's mind since they subsist in accordance with thought²⁴⁰.

²³⁶ This passage falls within a wider section where the general source of information is the *Περὶ φωνῆς* of Diogenes of Babylon (Diogenes Laertius 7.55)

²³⁷ Stoic considerations on ambiguity in language and their profound influence on Augustine's approach to knowledge acquisition and the Paradox of Enquiry in the DM will be discussed at length below (§ 6.1).

²³⁸ This point is made by Atherton: 1993, 302-3.

²³⁹ The ultimate source for such a term may be Stoic logical analysis. As suggested by the use of the cognate *δηλωτικόν* (Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 2.104-106).

²⁴⁰ A fuller sense of what this showing might be as seen in DM will be considered in due course (*v. inf.* § 7, § 8, and § 9).

0350 The discussion by Seneca in the *epistulae* (117.13) provides an interesting parallel with this usage of ‘show’. For when one observes a state of affairs the senses show it (*ostendit*) to the mind which in turn makes a judgement about it²⁴¹. It is difficult to know whether Seneca is drawing on a particular source for this or whether the example is his own, yet, as will be seen in the following discussion of Augustine, it is plausible that the parallel between visual showing and verbal showing was an intentional one. If such an interpretation is correct then there is an item available to be understood such that it can be shown, visually, to the mind via the eyes and such that it can be shown, aurally, to the mind via the ears. Specifically, the state of affairs which is the material item <Cato> so disposed as to be walking, is available visually as <the walking Cato>; while the same state of affairs²⁴² is available, whether the material Cato is present or not²⁴³, in an aurally accessible manner, as the statement “Cato is walking”. In the first example, the corporeal item so disposed shows the state of affairs to one via the senses, while in the second, it is the statement which shows the state of affairs to one, also via the senses.

0351 Before moving on to a more specific consideration of Augustine’s position it will be useful to briefly review the term used by the Stoics in their approach to signification.

0352 A word (φωνή) is a sign (σημαῖνον) which shows (δηλοῦν) its signification (σημαινόμενον) to the mind of the hearer. This signification is a state of affairs (αὐτὸ τὸ πράγμα) which is incorporeal (ἄσώματον), is accessible to thought ([τοῦ πράγματος] ἀντιλαμβανόμεθα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ παρυφισταμένου

²⁴¹ v. *inf.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6 on the status of *res* and how the concrete particular shows the state of affairs to mind via the eyes and how the word shows the state of affairs to the mind via ears.

²⁴² The question of the ontological status of these states of affairs and their ‘sameness’ will be passed over as being extraneous to the present discussion. This ontological question will be central to the following analysis of Augustine’s position and will be considered in due course (§ 5.2.1.2.5.6).

διανοίᾳ), and is accessed by the mind through the senses as a rational presentaion (λογικὴ φαντασία). The presentation is rational and as such it is sayable (λεκτόν).

0353 In Augustine's analysis of language in the DM and in the DD there is a picture of language which is extremely close to that of the Stoics as presented above.

Augustine unequivocally describes words as signs (DD 5.1; DM 2). Words are in fact signs *par excellence* in that they are things such that their whole being rests in the fact that they are signs (DDC 1.1).

0354 Signs are, most relevantly to this discussion, described in each of these three texts (DD, DM, DDC) in the following manner²⁴⁴.

S1 *signum est quod et se ipsum sensui et praeter se aliquid animo ostendit.*
(dial. 5.9-10)

S2 *... memoria, cui uerba inhaerent, ea revoluendo facit uenire in mentem res ipsas, quarum signa sunt uerba.*
(2)

S3 *signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire...*
(doctr. chr. 2.1)

S4 *signa... ad significandum aliquid adhibentur.*
(doctr. chr. 1.1)

0355 A word (*uerbum*), therefore, is a sign (*signum*) which shows (*ostendit*) something (*aliquid*) to the mind (*animo*) of the hearer. What is caused to come to mind (*facit uenire in mentem*) are the things themselves (*res ipsas*), these things, as will be seen, are in fact states of affairs and it is these states of affairs which are signified (*ad significandum aliquid*). This state of affairs is accessible to thought (DD 5.9-10; DM 2; DDC 2.1) and is such as to be sayable (*dicibile*).

0356 The sayable in Augustine is what is understood in the word and contained in the mind.

²⁴³ It is in this respect that it is the sayable states of affairs are what is true or false (Sextus Empiricus,

quidquid... ex uerbo non aures sed animus sentit et ipso animo tenetur inclusum, dicibile uocatur.

(dial. 5.50-52)

dicibile... in uerbo intellegitur et animo continetur...

(dial. 5.60-62)

It is the conception of a word in the mind and is prior to utterance²⁴⁵.

res autem ipsa, quae iam uerbum non est neque uerbi in mente conceptio...

(dial. 5.54-55)

... cum [uerba] animo sensa sunt, ante uocem dicibilia erunt...

(dial. 5.73-74)

0357 The fact that Augustine stresses the distinction between the *res*, or state of affairs, which is signified and the *dicibile* as a conception of a word in the mind is entirely consistent with the position he adopts in the DM²⁴⁶. This is clarified by two points: firstly, the role of memory in the linguistic act (cf. S2 above, 0354) and secondly, by the formal nature of images and their place in language (cf. DM 39). A state of affairs is accessible to the mind and can be thought or spoken but this does not entail that it is equivalent to thought or with the sayable aspect of thought.

0358 When discussing the complicated example of ‘*nihil*’²⁴⁷ and what it is that this term refers to Augustine proposes that it refers to a state of mind which is caused not by encountering a particular thing but rather by encountering a state of affairs such that the mind does not see a thing (*cum rem non uidet*) and finds (*inuenit*) or thinks that it has found (*inuenisse se putat*) what is not (*non esse*)²⁴⁸.

M. 8.12).

²⁴⁴ v. *sup.* 0095.

²⁴⁵ The question as to whether the Stoic position was equivalent to this is not strictly relevant to the present discussion. What is relevant is that this is the understanding which Augustine has of the term.

²⁴⁶ This point is only fully appreciated with Augustine’s completion of his argument in the DM. Words, inner or outer, are only possible after the state of affairs has been experienced and stored in the memory in such a way as to be accessible via language (v. *inf.* § 8 and § 9).

²⁴⁷ v. *sup.* § 3.4.2.

²⁴⁸ Cf. “[Wittgenstein’s] Tractarian “solution” amounts to conceding that we can’t really talk about non-existent objects: when we say something doesn’t exist, we are to be construed as talking about certain existent objects and denying that they are arranged in a specific way’ (Stern: 1995, 55); cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.02; 2.026; 2.027; 3.202; 3.221.

Aug. quid igitur facimus? an affectionem animi quandam, cum rem non uidet et tamen non esse inuenit aut inuenisse se putat, hoc uerbo significari dicimus potius quam rem ipsam quae nulla est?

(3)

That is to say, the mind is affected not by an encounter with a state of affairs which is not, or is non-existent, but rather that it is affected by a state of affairs which is contrary to what was expected.

0359 It had been proposed by the Stoics that something can only be taught by something or by not-something. Since it cannot be taught by not-something due to the fact that such an item has no subsistence in the mind, it must be taught by something.

καὶ μὴν εἰ διδάσκεται τί, ἤτοι διὰ τῶν οὐτινῶν διδαχθήσεται
ἢ διὰ τῶν τινῶν. ἀλλὰ διὰ μὲν τῶν οὐτινῶν οὐχ οἶόν τε
διδαχθῆναι· ἀνυπόστατα γάρ ἐστι τῇ διανοίᾳ ταῦτα κατὰ τοὺς
ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς.

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 1.17)

In this way the term ‘*nihil*’²⁴⁹ is seen to have meaning and to signify a state of affairs in which one does not see a thing and finds, or thinks one has found, that it does not exist so that the term reflects a state of affairs which can be thought and therefore cause a state of mind rather than something which is a not-something.

0360 That ‘nothing’ is to be interpreted as a reflecting a state of affairs should be considered together with the fact that Augustine quickly moves from the discussion of terms such as ‘*paries*’ (DM 5) onto discussion of terms such as ‘*ambulare*’ (DM 6)²⁵⁰. Such terms focus the fact that there are things and dispositions or states of affairs which are to be understood relationally to them.

οὕτω καὶ τῶν φανταστῶν ἓνια μὲν οἶονεῖ ψαύοντα καὶ
θιγγάνοντα τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ ποιεῖται τὴν ἐν τούτῳ τύπωσιν,
ὑποῖόν ἐστι τὸ λευκὸν καὶ μέλαν καὶ κοινῶς τὸ σῶμα, ἓνια

²⁴⁹ The point in this comparison is not that the word ‘*nihil*’ teaches but rather that the state of affairs ‘teaches’ so as to cause a state of mind. Therefore, the state of affairs is the ‘something’.

²⁵⁰ *v. inf.* § 6 and the role of the sentence in the DM - obscurity through atomisation but clarity through context and therefore the relational quality inherent in states of affairs.

δὲ τοιαύτην ἔχει φύσιν, τοῦ ἡγεμονικοῦ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς
φαντασιουμένου καὶ οὐχ ὑπ' αὐτῶν, ὅποιά ἐστι τὰ ἀσώματα
λεκτά.

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.409)

Seneca (*ep.* 117.13) expresses this in terms which are more obviously linguistic, and hence closer to the Augustinian approach, in saying that there are things and things which are said about them.

0361 This said, Augustine does discuss items such as are signified by terms denoting river, wall, and the like. It would seem awkward to describe these items as sayable states of affairs and if they are not intelligible or sayable in this sense one must consider how they are to be understood or said. A term such as 'river' does of course have, in general, two possible meanings: a particular river or the universal river. The universal river may in turn denote the class, or extension, of all rivers, or the abstract river. The general application of the term will be considered in due course (§ 5.2.1.2.5.6). What perhaps can be said with reference to such items is that they cannot strictly be *said* at all but can only be *named*. Such items can be named but when they are disposed in a certain way something can be said about them, that is, a statement can be made concerning them.

0362 In the use of words to refer to particular items one must be aware of Augustine's approach to perception and concept formation²⁵¹. Augustine holds that the form which is immanent in any object is in fact that which is perceived in any perceptual act. This formal aspect is in turn available to perception, this in turn to thought, and this in turn to storage as an item in the memory (*trin.* 11.16; *v. sup.* 0287). What makes this process possible is the inherently rational nature of these forms and the rational nature of the human mind (*ord.* 2.32-33). The manner in which this formal aspect of an item can be accessed is various but for Augustine the primary

mode upon which all other rest is through the intellect and this is determined via the analogy, used extensively in the DM (and elsewhere), with vision²⁵².

0363 The multiple aspects whereby an item, or state of affairs, can be formally accessed is to be seen in Augustine's stressing the *-ibilis* termination in the dialogue (DM 8 in particular: *uisibilia*; *audibilia*; *significabilia*)²⁵³. One can imagine a situation such as a girl playing the flute: one may see her playing and receive the form in a visible manner; one may hear her and do so in an audible manner; or one may be told that she is playing the flute and receive it in a sayable and hence signifiable manner; and what links them all is their common intelligibility. This common intelligibility is due to the formal nature of the state of affairs. This example brings out Augustine's stress upon the need for direct visual experience (which is of course an analogy to explicate the primary need for direct intellectual experience of the formal aspect²⁵⁴) first of all for if one has not already seen the girl playing the flute, on hearing the sound one could not access the form in an audible way so as to comprehend it²⁵⁵.

0364 In this way one can conceive of the analogy between items which are formally intelligible²⁵⁶ and states of affairs which are also formally intelligible. However, the *dicibile* depends upon one having already perceived the item and therefore as having the formal aspect of it stored in the memory²⁵⁷.

²⁵¹ v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.2.4, with particular regard to 0273-0295.

²⁵² The ultimate conclusion reached in the DM rests upon this and will be considered below (§ 9.3).

²⁵³ Of course *intelligibilia* and *dicibilia* are of great importance to this point.

²⁵⁴ v. *inf.* § 9.

²⁵⁵ There are of course circumstances where one might be deceived, to this extent knowledge, for Augustine, is only of intelligible items, i.e. Transcendent Forms.

²⁵⁶ The rational aspect of these items as received as impressions can be understood as analogous to the Stoic λογική φαντασία. What determines the rationality of such an impression is the very fact that it is sayable. This will be considered at greater length in due course (§ 5.2.1.2.5.6). However, this would seem to be the way in which Augustine understands the sayable aspect of the formal presentations.

²⁵⁷ The role of memory and the importance of Recollection will be discussed in due course (§ 8 and § 9).

0365 As Augustine stresses in the Lion Paradox²⁵⁸ (DM 23), whereby what is said comes from one's mouth, and so if one says 'lion' then a lion comes from one's mouth²⁵⁹, words have sound and signification: the sound comes from one's mouth and bears its significance, which is the element understood in the word. The significance is a mental item and is the signification - the signification is what takes the mind to the thing.

0366 To recap, if there is a subject x and there is a state of affairs such that Fx , this state of affairs is intelligible, it is formally available to the perceiver, and the perceiver can assent to the presentation which is perceived due to its intelligibility by means of the proposition ' Fx ' and this proposition is sayable " Fx ".

The particular state of affairs $\langle Fx \rangle$ is intelligible as $/Fx/$ which is in turn sayable $\backslash Fx \backslash$ and this sayable is utterable as $[Fx]$.

0367 When one has encountered a state of affairs then it is available, memorially, to one whether there is a visible instance of it present or not. Therefore, one can signify the state of affairs simply by saying it $[Fx]$; what is signified is the state of affairs, that is, it is the signification. So too with particulars, such as x , for this subject is also intelligible in that it is formally available to the perceiver. As one can recall a state of affairs by means of a proposition so too can one recall a particular subject by means of a name which in turn accesses an image (DM 39). This is not to say that one is talking about the proposition or about the image but rather that one talks about the subject and/or about the state of affairs and these are the significations which enable one to do so. This is one of the important emphases of the discussion of speaking about the moon in the following passage of the DM.

²⁵⁸ This is a variant of the Stoic example cited by Clement (*Strom.* 8.9.26.5).

²⁵⁹ Use and mention as employed in the refutation of this must be considered at some length (v. *inf.* § 6.1.3).

de illis [sensibilibus] cum interrogamur, respondemus, si praesto sunt ea, quae sentimus, uelut cum a nobis quaeritur intuentibus lunam nouam, qualis aut ubi sit. hic ille, qui interrogat, si non uidet, credit uerbis et saepe non credit, discit autem nullo modo, nisi et ipse quod dicitur uideat, ubi iam non uerbis, sed rebus ipsis et sensibus discit. nam uerba eadem sonant uidenti, quae non uidenti etiam sonuerunt. cum uero non de his, quae coram sentimus, sed de his, quae aliquando sensimus, quaeritur, non iam res ipsas, sed imagines ab eis impressas memoriaeque mandatas loquimur, quae omnino quomodo uera dicamus, cum falsa intueamur, ignoro, nisi quia non nos ea uidere ac sentire, sed uidisse ac sensisse narramus.

(39)²⁶⁰

0368 There is a particular state of affairs such that the moon is new. When interlocutor *A* says “The moon is new” to interlocutor *B*, who is also looking at the new moon, *B* simultaneously perceives the state of affairs as a visible and intelligible item and hears the state of affairs expressed as an audible and intelligible item. The intelligible item is the state of affairs and so it would seem to make little difference, in semiotic terms²⁶¹, whether one wants to refer to the *res ipsa* which is signified in terms of the visible or in terms of the sayable presentation of it for the reference is in all actuality the state of affairs which is an intelligible item. It is for this reason that Augustine often seems to imply that when a particular object is under discussion that it is *that thing there* which is the *significatum* - because in the sense discussed it is. What is signified is the intelligible, formal, item or state of affairs.

non enim quod latebat in memoria mea sed quod audio, cogito cum aliquid mihi narratur. non ipsas uoces loquentis dico ne quisquam putet in illam me exisse trinitatem quae foris in sensibilibus et in sensibus agitur, sed eas cogito corporum species quas narrans uerbis sonisque significat, quas utique non reminiscens sed audiens cogito. sed si diligentius consideremus, nec tunc exceditur memoriae modus. neque enim uel intellegere possem narrantem si ea quae dicit et si contexta tunc primum audirem, non tamen generaliter

²⁶⁰ This is an important passage with regards to the conclusions reached in the DM and will be discussed at length in due course (v. *inf.* § 9.3.1). There is therefore much of importance, and concerned with the actual thrust of the argument employed in the passage, which is passed over at present. The above discussion employs this passage so as to clarify Augustine’s approach to signification and should not be seen as a focused analysis of the passage in the context of its place in the argument of the DM.

²⁶¹ There is clearly an epistemic difference, as discussed above (0363).

singula meminisse. qui enim mihi narrat uerbi gratia aliquem montem silua exutum et oleis indutum, ei narrat qui meminere species et montium et siluarum et olearum.

(*trin.* 11.14)

To this end Augustine for the most part discusses general terms in the DM not particular terms which cause or make possible this misunderstanding. Also, in the above passage (*trin.* 11.14) the implication is not that one speaks *about* an intelligible item but rather that one speaks about the actual object before one's eyes. However, the fact that the object can be perceived, understood, and spoken about is due to the formal aspect of it and this aspect is that which is signified and it is this aspect which can be stored in the memory and enable one to speak about, and signify, the object when it is not actually present²⁶².

0369 The relation between a visibly accessible state of affairs and a simultaneously accessible audible one can be schematised as follows.

(D15)

<the moon is new>	→	State of Affairs	←	[the moon is new]
<visible>		intelligible/sayable		[audible]

0370 However, if *B* turns away and, consequently, is no longer looking at the particular state of affairs, <the new moon>²⁶³, and hears the statement [the moon is new], he no longer has available the particular item or state of affairs which is being

²⁶² This suggests difficulties raised by Aristotle (*Meta.* 1030b-1031a) concerning whether it is possible to identify an individual in general terms - if what is intelligible is necessarily general. The example of the Moon is particularly useful here as there is only one of it.

²⁶³ This state of affairs is visually accessible to *B* if and only if looking at it and continually being presented formally, each presentation instantaneously being replaced by the next. For Augustine, memory is, not unreasonably, acutely involved in every perceptual act and to this extent every perception is in fact of a image. This fact of Augustinian epistemology means that for one to accurately talk of any thing it must be before one as this visible presentation is forever, as it were, changing before one's eyes or, perhaps more accurately, one's perception is constantly renewing itself. This is a consequence of his theory of perception and of his Platonic approach to the material world. Intelligible items, on the other hand, are always available to one for direct experience. These points will be discussed more fully in due course.

referred to but must use his memory to access the intelligible state of affairs as a proposition - in this way he understands the utterance for he has available the signification memorially but he does not have the actual, and presently occurring, state of affairs available and so must, in strict terms, reply in the past tense if engaging in a discussion of the state of affairs as it is available to him in his memory not present before his eyes (as intelligible items always are). To talk of the state of affairs, or of a particular item, in the present tense one in fact speaks of an image of it, stored in the mind.

sed de his, quae aliquando sensimus, quaeritur, non iam res ipsas, sed imagines ab eis impressas memoriaeque mandatas loquimur, quae omnino quomodo uera dicamus, cum falsa intueamur, ignoro, nisi quia non nos ea uidere ac sentire, sed uidisse ac sensisse narramus.

(39)

0371 Augustine's stress on the use of the past tense so as to clarify signification may be usefully compared with a passage in Sextus on the Stoic consideration of truth and falsity in relation to past, present, and future time.

ἔτι, φασί, τὸ σημεῖον παρὸν παρόντος εἶναι δεῖ σημεῖον. ἔνιοι γὰρ ἑξαπατῶμενοι καὶ παρὸν παρωχημένου θέλουσιν εἶναι σημεῖον, ὥς ἐπὶ τοῦ "εἰ οὐλήν ἔχει οὗτος, ἔλκος ἔσχηκεν οὗτος". τὸ μὲν γὰρ "οὐλήν ἔχει" παρὸν ἐστὶ, φαίνεται γὰρ, τὸ δὲ ἔλκος ἐσχηκέναι παρωχημένον, οὐκέτι γὰρ ἐστὶν ἔλκος, καὶ παρὸν μέλλοντος, ὥς τὸ περιεχόμενον τῷ τοιούτῳ σθνημμένῳ "εἰ καρδίαν τέτρωται οὗτος, ἀποθάνειται οὗτος". τὸ μὲν γὰρ τραῦμα τῆς καρδίας εἶναι φασιν ἤδη, τὸν δὲ θάνατον μέλλειν. ἀγνοοῦσι δὲ οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγοντες ὅτι ἄλλ' ἐστὶ τὰ παρωχημένα καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα, τὸ μέντοι σημεῖον καὶ σημειωτὸν κἀν τούτοις παρὸν παρόντος ἐστὶν. ἐν τε γὰρ τῷ προτέρῳ τῷ "εἰ οὐλήν ἔχει οὗτος, ἔλκος ἔσχηκεν οὗτος" τὸ μὲν ἔλκος γέγονεν ἤδη καὶ παρώχηκεν, τὸ δὲ ἔλκος ἐσχηκέναι τοῦτον, ἀξίωμα καθεστηκός, ἐνέστηκεν, περὶ γεγονότος τινὸς λεγόμενον· ἐν τε τῷ "εἰ καρδίαν τέτρωται οὗτος, ἀποθάνειται οὗτος" ὁ μὲν θάνατος μέλλει, τὸ δὲ ἀποθανεῖσθαι τοῦτον ἀξίωμα ἐνέστηκεν, περὶ μέλλοντος λεγόμενον, παρὸ καὶ νῦν ἐστὶν ἀληθές.

(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.254-255)

0372 In the Augustine passage (DM 39) the emphasis is that the past tense is needed concerning past perceived objects when speaking of them for one is speaking about a

state of affairs but must alter the tense so as to clarify that one is talking about something previously experienced, and to clarify that it is not the state of affairs as memory item which one is speaking of but as something perceived in the past.

0373 To return to the signification of present states of affairs, when one is asked about such a state of affairs one can simply point (there are of course issues at play here²⁶⁴) and when speaking of present states of affairs one's words by analogy point also (cf. S1, 0354). When looking at a new moon if *B* approaches and *A* points at the moon then *B* grasps, in addition to the significance of pointing as he has experienced this before, the state of affairs. Similarly one may say to *B* that the moon is new and then *B* (understanding the words from his memory store) will look to the moon and grasp the particular, presently available, state of affairs.

0374 The Stoics divided dialectic into significations and utterance (Diogenes Laertius 7.43); and significations into impressions and derivatively subsistent sayables, such as propositions (Diogenes Laertius 7.43). For Augustine these impressions are formal and can be accessed as sayables or as images, neither of these are the things themselves but are accessible aspects of them. One must essentially and fundamentally have had access to the state of affairs so as to be able to say it or to understand another's saying it - one must have it in mind/memory so that it can be sayable at all.

0375 Augustine's theory of meaning, according to this interpretation, is clearly Stoic in many of its aspects. However, the actual metaphysical basis for it is Platonic and Augustine tends towards the conclusion ostensibly arrived at in the *Cratylus* that words signify the Forms (v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.2.1). This must be qualified by

²⁶⁴ v. *sup.* § 4 and v. *inf.* § 7.

the fact that there is a strong Aristotelian element (v. *sup.* 5.2.1.2.4) in Augustine's approach to how words actually signify these Forms²⁶⁵.

0376 There remain two related issues to be clarified: the place of general terms in this system and the role as the sayable as an objective mode of communication²⁶⁶.

0377 General terms are introduced, in a philosophically interesting sense, with the discussion of signification at DM (8).

*Ad id scilicet, quod quidque appellatur, uelut Romulus, Roma, uirtus, fluius
et innumerabilia cetera... rerum partim uisibilium sicut est Romulus, Roma,
fluius, partim intelligibilium, sicut est uirtus.*
(8)

In this passage there is *Romulus*, a concrete particular, *Roma*, again a particular, and *uirtus*, an intelligible. However, it is unclear as to how one should interpret '*fluius*', for is it a particular river, or the class of all rivers, or river in abstraction. Augustine goes on to specify that the reference of '*flumen*' is the thing before one and able to be seen now.

flumen signum sit rei, quae iam uideri potest, ut inter hanc rem et flumen,
(9)

However, taken individually these terms (*fluius* and *flumen*) are general and yet when asked what one of them refers to at any particular moment one would, as it were, point and say "*flumen* is this thing here". There is a difficulty in that Latin lacks an indefinite article, yet the most straightforward way that such a statement would be understood in any natural language would be that 'this thing here' is an example of *flumen*. In this sense, it seems most plausible to interpret Augustine's approach to general terms as something close to Porphyry's treatment of particulars and universals in Aristotle's *Categories* (Porphyry, in *Cat.* 90,30-91,5). '*flumen*' is a general term

²⁶⁵ The position of Forms *qua* transcendental items in this argument has been passed over for the present and will be reintroduced into the discussion with the consideration of the Inner Teacher and the proposed solution to the Paradox of Enquiry (v. *inf.* § 8 and § 9).

which applies to a universal concept derived from particular instantiations of it. The term refers to its extension and when a particular instance of that class is present the term is used to talk about and refer to that instance there and then²⁶⁷. Indeed, this sayable universal concept is used so as to confirm that any particular instantiation is in fact an instantiation. It is useful to consider the role of the Form stored in the memory and which gives rise to that which occurs in the ‘mind’s eye’ (*trin.* 11.16) and the numerical equivalent to this which is the ‘judging number’ (*mus.* 6.22)²⁶⁸. Both of these examples are parallel to this concept of the general sayable.

0378 It is in this sense that the sayable as an objective mode of communication is most clearly understood. In Augustine the ontological background is formal and yet there is an interesting parallel between the role of the *dicibile* and the Epicurean concept of πρόληψις²⁶⁹. As to whether this concept is used by Augustine as an actual source for his model of signification is questionable for it seems that all of the influences necessary for Augustine’s approach can be drawn from Stoic semantic theory²⁷⁰ and the Neoplatonic reception of Plato and the subsequent syncretism of Platonic ideas with those of Aristotle. Nevertheless, what is of interest is the way in which the parallels between the two concepts can be used to clarify Augustine’s use of the *dicibile* as an objective standard. Both *dicibile* and πρόληψις are derived from experience and are a means whereby one may evaluate and express these experiences.

0379 As noted by O’Daly²⁷¹, it seems that the *dicibile*, although derived from a specific impression of a sense-perception, is *qua* the meaning of a word, such as to

²⁶⁶ As stated in O’Daly (1987, 143) Augustine does not support a position which would imply such a thing as private language or the like.

²⁶⁷ v. *sup.* 0261 for the central role of Forms in this process.

²⁶⁸ v. *sup.* 0287.

²⁶⁹ Ruef: 1981, 187 n.203a. For a brief discussion of this cf. O’Daly: 1987, 142.

²⁷⁰ Indeed, as the Stoics took the term ‘πρόληψις’ over from the Epicureans and applied it to ‘natural concepts’, there would appear to be little need to seek out a directly Epicurean source for Augustine in this respect.

²⁷¹ O’Daly: 1987, 142.

allow one to both identify the particular item which has been perceived and also to identify other items which fall within the extension of the term. Further, any image which is stored in the memory and possessed of an inherent rational structure such that it can be presented linguistically and has propositional content, may in fact have more than one linguistic correlate: for example, ‘Carthage’ will also have the correlate ‘city’. Just as these images may have more than one linguistic correlate, so too may the *dicibile* have a number of possible images, that is, images derived from the extension of the term. In this sense, different people may indeed have different thoughts but there will nevertheless be a general, objective, *dicibile* to correlate to the image of, for example, ‘city’.

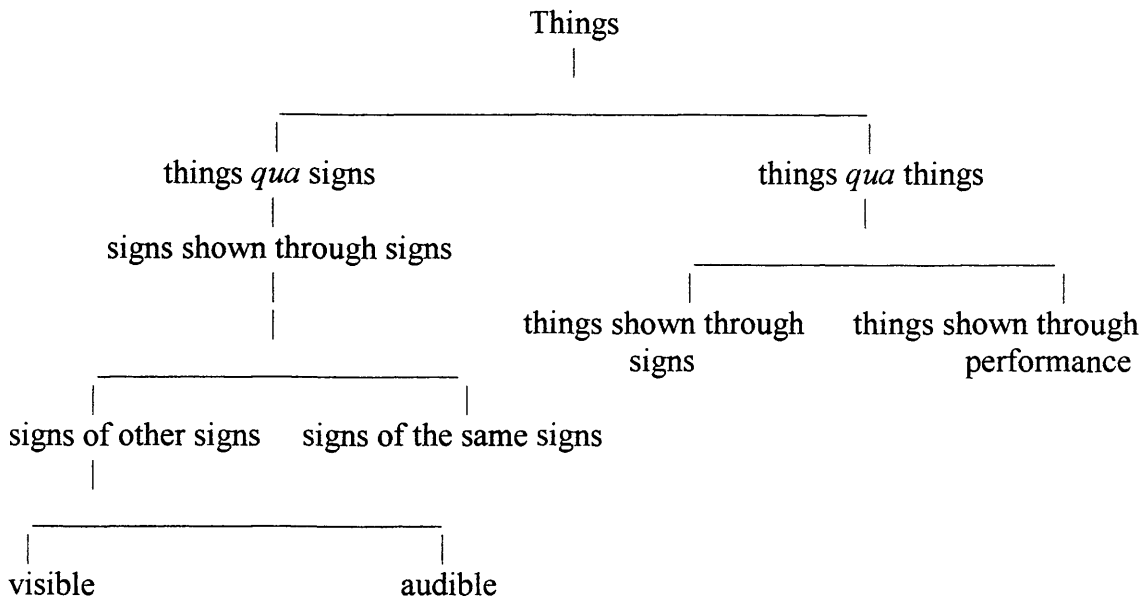
0380 Rational impressions (λογικὴ φαντασία) as presented in Stoicism are also not to be seen simply as thoughts which directly correspond to their sayable (λεκτόν)²⁷². For one may plausibly think of the same linguistic term in any number of ways: “The rational impression that my cat is hungry will be a different thought if I see the cat or hear the cat or reflect that I failed to feed it this morning” (LS 1: 1987, 202.). The sayable will be correspondent to all of these thoughts, whether held by the same or by different people, and to this extent provides an objective means of communication between individuals within a shared linguistic community.

5.3. Audible Signs of Audible Signs.

0381 The discussion will now return to Augustine’s classification of signs. The classification had reached the point which is seen in the following schema (*v. sup.* 0213).

²⁷² Cf. *HP* 1: 1987, 201-202.

(D16)



0382 As Augustine is particularly concerned with the disambiguation of linguistic signs, the classification now moves on to concentrate on audible signs²⁷³.

0383 ‘Name’²⁷⁴ signifies something, and this something is whatever each thing is called. Therefore, it can be seen that names denote or refer, as a name is that by which a thing is called. ‘Name’ is introduced as a audible sign, [name], which signifies other audible signs, [Romulus], [Rome], [virtue], [river]. ‘Name’ then signifies the concept, or sayable, which stands for the class, or extension, of all possible examples of it.

²⁷³ Written words, *qua* visible signs, are not defined as proper words (v. *sup.* 0211) and so are bypassed in Augustine’s disambiguation of linguistic signs.

²⁷⁴ Augustine’s use of ‘*nomen*’, and that of Latin in general during this period, is ambiguous. The term means ‘name’ in the broad sense of whatever anything is called and means ‘noun’ in its specifically grammatical sense. The classification underway at this point in the dialogue is concerned with the disambiguation of linguistic terms and it should perhaps be no surprise that one of the primary terms under consideration is itself ambiguous. Due to the fact that much of Augustine’s following argument intentionally turns on the very ambiguity of the term, and to this extent enforces the thesis which Augustine presents concerning ambiguity of linguistic terms (i.e. that only context can bring about disambiguation - and even that only does so partially), ‘*nomen*’ will be translated as ‘name’. The sense of ‘name’ must be understood as encompassing both of the English ‘noun’ and ‘name’, sometimes meaning one, sometimes the other, and often shifting between the two. To have attempted to fix the meaning at any point, beyond the most obvious (such as where ‘*nomen*’ is defined grammatically as ‘noun’), would be to limit, and often obscure, Augustine’s purpose and would run the risk of losing altogether the complex movement which Adeodatus undergoes from a one dimensional understanding of the term (i.e. ‘*nomen*’ = noun) to an altogether broader and more complex grasp of the fluidity of the term.

Aug. id quoque te arbitror assentiri, cum dicimus nomen, significare nos aliquid.

Ad. uerum est.

Aug. quid tandem?

Ad. id scilicet, quod quidque appellatur, uelut Romulus, Roma, uirtus, fluuius et innumerabilia cetera.

(8)

0384 While the general term 'name' signifies all particular names, these names signify things. Names are signs and what are named by these signs are items which can be signified, namely signifiabiles.

Aug. num ista quattuor nomina nullas res significant?

Ad. immo aliquas.

Aug. num nihil distat inter haec nomina et eas res, quae his significantur?

Ad. immo plurimum.

Aug. uellem abs te audire, quidnam id sit.

Ad. hoc uel in primis, quod haec signa sunt, illa non sunt.

Aug. placetne appellemus significabilia ea...

(8)

0385 Signifiabiles are, primarily, defined as those items which can be signified by signs but are not signs themselves.

Aug. ...significabilia ea, quae signis significari possunt et signa non sunt, sicut ea, quae uideri possunt, uisibilia nominamus...

(8)

0386 However, signifiabiles may also be signs themselves, for names themselves can be signified as was seen with the example of perceptual distinctions in signification: a written word is a visible sign of a spoken word, which is an audible sign.

Aug. quid? illa quattuor signa, quae paulo ante pronuntiasti, nullo ne alio signo significantur?

Ad. miror quod iam mihi excidisse arbitraris, quod ea quae scribuntur eorum, quae uoce proferuntur, signorum signa esse comperimus.

Aug. dic inter ista quid distet.

Ad. quod illa uisibilia sunt, haec audibilia; cur enim non et hoc nomen admittas, si admisimus significabilia?

(8)

0387 Also, with regards to audible signs alone, there are those which, in addition to signifying, are also themselves signified. Particular names signify, but these particulars are themselves in turn signified themselves by the general term ‘name’.

Ad. hoc quoque recentius dictum recordor; nam nomen responderam significare aliquid et huic significationi quattuor ista subieceram, et illud autem et haec, siquidem uoce proferuntur, audibilia esse cognosco. Aug. quid ergo inter audibile signum et audibilia significata, quae rursus signa sunt, interest?

(8)

0388 It is notable that only at this point in the dialogue is the theme of signification felt to have been sufficiently clarified for the term ‘*significatio*’ to be introduced, the sense being of signification in the abstract, in separation from its ‘bearer’.

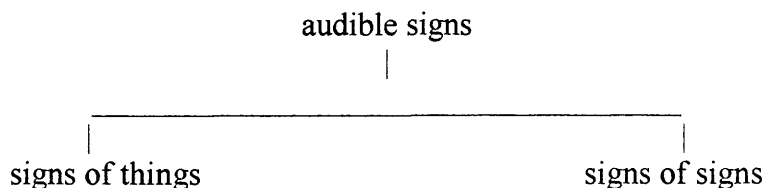
0389 The division between this class of audible signs and their audible *significata* depends upon their respective objects of signification. ‘Name’ is an audible sign of audible signs, while names are audible signs of things, both visible and intelligible²⁷⁵.

Ad. inter illud quidem, quod dicimus nomen, et haec quattuor, quae significationi eius subiecimus, hoc distare uideo, quod illud audibile signum est signorum audibilium, haec uero audibilia quidem signa sunt, non tamen signorum, sed rerum partim uisibilium sicut est Romulus, Roma, fluuius, partim intellegibilium, sicut est uirtus.

(8)

0390 The next stage in Augustine’s classification can therefore be schematised as follows.

(D17)



²⁷⁵ Both signs are clearly signs of things but audible signs of audible signs are signs of things *qua* signs, while audible signs of things are signs of things *qua* things (v. *sup.* 0086-0092).

5.4. Words and Names.

0391 'Word' signifies 'name' and so 'name' falls under the broader classification 'word' and is within its class or extension.

Aug. ...scisne omnia, quae uoce articulata cum aliquo significato proferuntur, uerba appellari?

Ad. scio.

Aug. ergo et nomen uerbum est, quando quidem id uidemus cum aliquo significato articulata uoce proferri, et cum dicimus disertum hominem bonis uerbis uti etiam nominibus utique utitur...

Aug. concedis igitur his duabus syllabis, quas edimus, cum dicimus uerbum, nomen quoque significari et ob hoc illud huius signum esse.

Ad. concedo.

(9)

0392 The question is raised as to the difference between 'word', which is a sign of 'name', and 'name', whose sign it is. It is also worth clarification that the classificatory distinctions which are of importance here relate to a disambiguation of signs with reference to their significations. The word 'river', [river], is a sign of a thing, <river>; the word 'name', [name], is a sign of a sign of a thing, [river]; while the word 'word', [word], is a sign of a sign of signs, [name].

Aug. hoc quoque respondeas uelim: cum uerbum signum sit nominis et nomen signum sit fluminis et flumen signum sit rei, quae iam uideri potest, ut inter hanc rem et flumen, id est signum eius, et inter hoc signum et nomen, quod huius signi signum est dixisti quid intersit, quid interesse arbitraris inter signum nominis quod uerbum esse comperimus et ipsum nomen, cuius signum est?

(9)

0393 It is posited, concerning the difference between 'name' and 'word', that although 'word' signifies all names, 'name' does not signify all words. That is to say, there is a difference in extension between the terms: all names are words, not all words are names. It should be noted that 'nomen' is in this context translated as 'name' for the argument at this point and following depends to some extent on how

one understands ‘*nomen*’. There is a certain movement between *nomen* qua noun, and *nomen* as the more general ‘name’ (v. *sup.* 0383, n.274).

Ad. hoc distare intellego, quod ea quae significantur nomine, etiam uerbo significantur - ut enim nomen uerbum est, ita et flumen uerbum est - quae autem uerbo significantur, non omnia significantur et nomine. nam et illud si quod in capite habet abs te propositus uersus et hoc ex, de quo iam diu agentes in haec duce ratione peruenimus uerba sunt nec tamen nomina et talia multa inueniuntur. quamobrem cum omnia nomina uerba sint, non autem omnia uerba nomina sint, planum esse arbitror, quid inter uerbum distet et nomen, id est inter signum signi eius, quod nulla alia signa significat, et signum signi eius, quod rursus alia signa significat.

(9)

0394 That the distinction is one of extension is emphasised by the use of an

analogy: ‘Every horse is an animal, not every animal is a horse’²⁷⁶. It is of

significance that the use of ‘*uerbum*’ meaning ‘verb’ is noted, and that it is made clear

that the term is to be understood generally, just as ‘sign’ can be specifically or

generally applied. Yet this same point is not clarified with regard to the other word

under consideration, namely, ‘*nomen*’.

Aug. concedisne omnem equum animal esse nec tamen omne animal equum esse?

Ad. quis dubitauerit?

Aug. hoc ergo inter nomen et uerbum, quod inter equum et animal interest. nisi forte ab assentiendo id te reuocat, quod dicimus et alio modo uerbum, quo significantur ea, quae per tempora declinantur, ut scribo scripsi, lego legi, quae manifestum est non esse nomina.

Ad. dixisti omnino quod me dubitare faciebat.

Aug. ne te istuc moueat; dicimus enim et signa uniuersaliter omnia, quae significant aliquid, ubi etiam uerba esse inuenimus. dicimus item signa militaria, quae iam proprie signa nominantur, quo uerba non pertinent. et tamen si tibi dicerem: ut omnis equus animal, non autem omne animal equus, ita omne uerbum signum, non autem omne signum uerbum esse, nihil ut opinor dubitares.

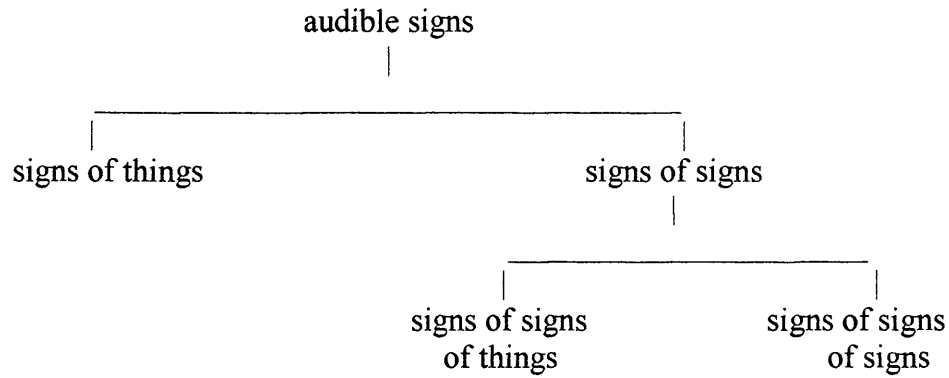
²⁷⁶ Extension is most accurately understood in this sense as relating to the Porphyrian interpretation of Aristotelian predication in the *Categories* (Porphyry, in *Cat.* 90,30-91,5) for the analysis of these terms, ‘name’ and ‘word’, by Augustine is framed within the context of the Aristotelian treatment of predication. What clarifies the categories of genus and species is the fact that the genus can be predicated of the species - such as ‘Every man is an animal’ or ‘Every name is a word’. However, the linguistic focus upon the application of the terms is Porphyrian in that the relation of predication to subject depends upon the fact that the predicate depends upon its extension, or class of particulars, for its meaning (v. *sup.* 0261; 0377).

*Ad. iam intellego et prorsus assentior hoc interesse inter uniuersale illud
uerbum et nomen, quod inter animal et equum.*

(9)

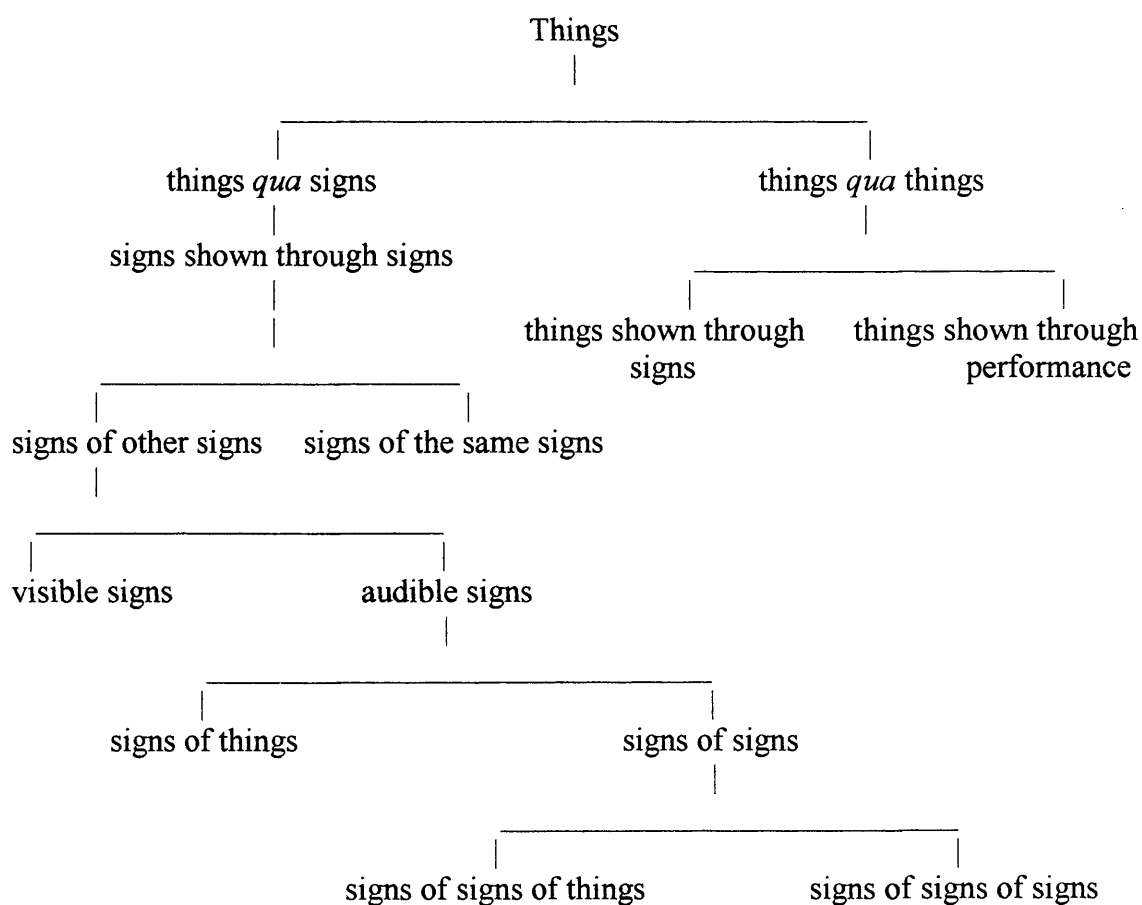
0395 The next section of the schema of classification is now as follows.

(D18)



0396 The overall classification will now be given before moving on to the two final classifications aimed at the disambiguation of the various modes of signification as developed thus far by Augustine (DM 7-9).

(D19)



0397 The process of classification has clearly proceeded to disambiguate the various modes of signification and has also demonstrated a method for doing so.

Consideration will now turn to the two final modes and to the most complicated areas of linguistic ambiguity.

5.5. Self-signifying Signs.

0398 There is a distinction between the word itself and the word in that it signifies.

This is to say, there is the distinction between the word *qua* thing and word *qua* signifier (as DDC 1.2)²⁷⁷. This focuses upon the use/mention distinction²⁷⁸, in that

²⁷⁷ v. *sup.* 0082-0092.

‘animal’ is the three syllable word [animal] when mentioned, and is that which signifies a particular item, <animal>, when used.

Aug. scisne, etiam cum dicimus animal, aliud esse hoc trisyllabum nomen, quod uoce prolatum est, aliud id quod significat?

Ad. iam hoc supra concessi de omnibus signis et significabilibus.

(10)

Implicit in this distinction is the definition of ‘*verbum*’ (DM 8)²⁷⁹, in which there is the differentiation between uttered sound (*uox*) and signification (*significatus*). This distinction is fully clarified with the *sonus* and *significatio* division of *uerbum* (DM 8)²⁸⁰.

0399 Some signs signify something else, but some signify themselves also and to this extent may be classified as self-signifying signs. ‘Sign’ is an example of the latter, for ‘sign’ signifies other signs but also signifies itself *qua* word, which necessarily is a sign.

Aug. num omnia signa tibi uidentur aliud significare quam sunt, sicut hoc trisyllabum, cum dicimus animal, nullo modo idem significat quod est ipsum?
Ad. non sane; nam cum dicimus signum, non solum signa cetera quaecumque sunt, sed etiam se ipsum significat; est enim uerbum et utique omnia uerba signa sunt.

(10)

0400 ‘Word’ is another example of such self-signifying signs, for ‘word’ signifies both other words and itself *qua* word. ‘*Verbum*’ has already been clarified as being used in the general sense of ‘word’ and not in the more specific sense of ‘verb’ (DM 9)²⁸¹.

Aug. num omnia signa tibi uidentur aliud significare quam sunt, sicut hoc trisyllabum, cum dicimus animal, nullo modo idem significat quod est ipsum?

²⁷⁸ Use/mention is an extremely interesting area of discussion in the DM and, as will be seen, does not accord strictly with the standard modern interpretation of these terms and the distinction highlighted by them. The distinction is first introduced here for discussion in the DM but as it is most fully considered later in the DM (cf. § 5.6.2.5 and § 6).

²⁷⁹ v. *sup.* 0214.

²⁸⁰ v. *sup.* 0388.

²⁸¹ v. *sup.* 0394.

Ad. non sane; nam cum dicimus signum, non solum signa cetera quaecumque sunt, sed etiam se ipsum significat; est enim uerbum et utique omnia uerba signa sunt.

(10)

0401 Both ‘*signum*’ and ‘*verbum*’ are uncontroversial as self-signifying signs and the same may be said for the third term introduced by Augustine, ‘*nomen*’. This use of ‘*nomen*’ is applied most specifically in its aspect *qua* noun. It is clear that the same point applies to ‘*nomen*’ *qua*, the more general, name (cf. DD 10.66-69). However, what is of interest to the development of Augustine’s argument as developed over the following few sections (DM 10-18) is that the initial position clearly fixes the use of ‘*nomen*’ in its aspect *qua* noun. It is at this point that there begins the blurring of reference between ‘name’ in general and ‘name’ in particular. Here ‘*nomen*’ specifically means (and legitimately so, with regards to the point being made at present in the argument) noun but the point being made concerning self-signifying signs applies equally to ‘*nomen*’ *qua* name in its broadest sense.

Aug. quid? nomen nonne similiter habet? nam et omnium generum nomina significat et ipsum nomen generis neutri nomen est. an si ex te quaererem, quae pars orationis nomen, posses mihi recte respondere nisi nomen?
Ad. uerum dicis.

(10)

0402 The treatment of ‘*nomen*’ at this point is philosophically significant for unlike the treatment of ‘*uerbum*’ there is no clear signalling of the general/specific distinction beforehand, but rather there is a shift in focus in the use of the term over the course of the central sentence.

... nam et omnium generum nomina significat et ipsum nomen generis neutri nomen est.

In the context of the previous discussion, in the DM, one has a general sense of ‘*nomen*’ as meaning the non-specific ‘name’ while in the course of this sentence the sense shifts to such an extent that it is clear by the next sentence that ‘*nomen*’ means

‘noun’. The development of this is created by the shift in context provided by the word ‘*genus*’ which, like ‘*nomen*’, can initially be interpreted generally as ‘kind’²⁸², or the like, but in its second occurrence is most readily rendered ‘gender’ due to the qualifying pronominal adjective ‘*neuter*’. The purpose behind this is so as to draw both Adeodatus and the reader into making assumptions about Augustine’s use of the word ‘*nomen*’ and so create a pregnant situation for bringing about insight into the related themes of use/mention and the inherent ambiguity in all language.

0403 The shift in meaning which occurs for both ‘*nomen*’ and ‘*genus*’ focuses the ambiguity in Augustine’s choice of words²⁸³ and the necessity for the hearer/reader to interpret these ambiguous words depending on the context within which they occur.

The development of Augustine’s argument concerning these observations will be considered incrementally as each passage is discussed in its place. However, at present, it is worth drawing attention to three key terms, which will be of great importance in the development of Augustine’s argument over the remainder of the DM. These are: ambiguity, context, and interpretation.

0404 From the examples of ‘*signum*’, ‘*uerbum*’, and ‘*nomen*’ the conclusion is reached that there are signs which signify themselves, as well as signifying other things.

Aug. sunt ergo signa, quae inter alia, quae significant, et se ipsa significant.
(10)

²⁸² Cf. translation by King: 1995, 108 n. 29.

²⁸³ If one holds to a consistent translation of these terms one achieves two rather different possible sentences.

5.6. Reciprocal Signs.

0405 The question is now raised as to whether there are signs which can signify each other in turn. Examples of signs which signify each other reciprocally are ‘name’ (*nomen*) and ‘word’ (*uerbum*). This can be seen in the fact that both ‘name’ and ‘word’ are both words, and likewise are both names (or, to make the point more clearly, nouns).

Aug. tu ergo nescis, cum dicimus nomen et uerbum, duo uerba nos dicere?
Ad. scio.
Aug. quid? illud nescis, cum dicimus nomen et uerbum, duo nomina nos dicere?

(11)

Therefore the conclusion is reasonably drawn that these signs, ‘word’ and ‘name’, signify each other reciprocally.

Aug. scis igitur tam nomen uerbo quam etiam uerbum nomine significari.
 (11)

0406 ‘Name’ and ‘word’ may reciprocally signify, in that ‘name’ is a word and word is a ‘name’, but there remains the issue as to how they differ, as indeed they do, other than between how they are written or how they sound.

Aug. potesne dicere, excepto eo quod diuerse scribuntur et sonant, quid inter se differant?

(11)

0407 It is proposed that the divergence lies in the fact that all names are words but not all words are names. Therefore, there must clearly some divergence in the extension of the two terms, for if this proposal is correct then it would seem that ‘name’, and by implication the extension of the term (all examples of names falling within the class), are part of a species of the wider genus that is ‘word’.

Ad. possum fortasse; nam id esse uideo, quod paulo ante dixi. uerba enim cum dicimus, omne quod articulata uoce cum aliquo significato profertur,

significamus. unde omne nomen et ipsum cum dicimus nomen uerbum est; at non omne uerbum nomen est, quamuis nomen sit, cum dicimus uerbum.

(11)

0408 Augustine does not, at this point, give enough attention to the possibility of a difference in extension to clarify the issue. There is a movement towards the need for a definition of sorts, for although the extension may be different, the reason for this difference must be clarified. However, before an attempt at this is made it is proposed that, as it is difficult to determine how the two terms differ, it may be that their extension is in fact the same but that they differ in some other way. The proposal (2) that it may be that every word is a name and that every name is a word dismisses the prior proposal (1) that every name is a word but not every word is a name. Proposal (1) is insufficiently tested, indeed it is in fact not tested at all, but rather, as soon as it is found that it is difficult to determine the difference in extension between the two terms, hypothesis (1) is set aside and the new hypothesis (2) is introduced. Augustine can be seen in this to assume that all words are names and although he does proceed to argue this point, it must be said that he does proceed rather too lightly to hypothesis (2) at this stage in the argument.

0409 This said, the hypothesis (2) that is raised is a rather interesting one. The suggestion is forwarded that the extension of the terms may be the same but that there may be a difference in signification.

Aug. quid? si omnia quidem, quae uoce articulata cum aliquo significato proferuntur, et uerba sunt et nomina, sed tamen alia de causa uerba et alia de causa nomina sunt, nihilne distabit inter nomen et uerbum?

Ad. quomodo istuc sit non intellego.

Aug. hoc saltem intellegis omne coloratum uisibile esse et omne uisibile coloratum, quamuis haec duo uerba distincte differenterque significant.

Ad. intellego.

Aug. quid? si ergo ita et omne uerbum nomen et omne nomen uerbum est, quamuis haec ipsa duo nomina uel duo uerba, id est nomen et uerbum, differentem habeant significationem?

Ad. iam uideo posse id accidere, sed quomodo id accadat, expecto ut ostendas.

(12)

There is therefore a difference between what one refers to and how one understands, or thinks about, what one refers to. This proposal of course raises for the modern reader the spectre of Frege's '*Sinn*' and '*Bedeutung*'²⁸⁴ and in an extremely broad sense it is not unhelpful to use Frege's example. However, it is important that one should not introduce too much of the actual philosophical distinctions which Frege is specifically making into the discussion²⁸⁵. Augustine's treatment of these issues are not Fregean, or *vice versa*. This said, the idea of sameness and identity which is central to Frege's analysis is also an important theme, albeit implicit, in the DM. The DM centrally focuses upon the nature of identification which clearly entails the ability to differentiate and to identify sameness. For both philosophers these considerations lead to a consideration of reference: namely, what is referred to in a linguistic act and how is it referred to.

0410 Therefore, with this *caveat*, one may see a broad relationship between the distinction drawn by Frege in his analysis of '*Sinn*' and '*Bedeutung*'²⁸⁶ and the distinction in Augustine²⁸⁷ between what is referred to and how it is understood.

In the Augustinian analysis one may have the extension (*X*) of term *x* and the extension (*Y*) of term *y* such that all the particulars of class *X* are members of class *Y*, and *vice versa*: all particular names are words, and all particular words are names²⁸⁸.

²⁸⁴ Frege: "Über Sinn und Bedeutung", *Zeitschr. f. Philos. und Philos. Kritik*, 100 (1892).

²⁸⁵ Although there is a general relatedness due to a concern with similar philosophical problems, it is not helpful to introduce such distinctions as Frege is making into Augustine's argument. Both philosophers have their own metaphysical background to which the foreground of language analysis can be applied and it is important to avoid any confusion which may arise from a comparison of the linguistic foreground of the two philosophers so as not to imply that this suggests a comparison between the metaphysical backgrounds. Perhaps of most importance to this following discussion is not to confuse the Fregean '*Bedeutung*' with what is here called 'extension' with reference to Augustine's analysis. The 'sense'/reference' terminology will be considered, in regard to Augustine, in due course (v. *inf.* § 5.6.1).

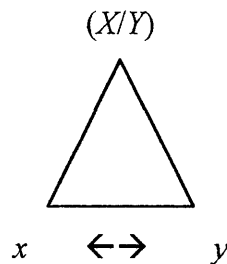
²⁸⁶ This broadness essentially avoids the specifics of the terms '*Sinn/Bedeutung*' in the Fregean analysis, particularly '*Bedeutung*' (cf. Evans: 1982, 8-10). Also, one should note that the similarity is in the *distinction* between these terms ('*Sinn*' and '*Bedeutung*') not between the terms themselves.

²⁸⁷ This distinction in Augustine ultimately deriving from Stoic semantics (v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.2.5.5).

²⁸⁸ The obvious objection that all words are not names will be discussed below (§ 5.6.2).

Therefore, the extension (X/Y) encompasses all possible references of the terms x and y .

(D20)



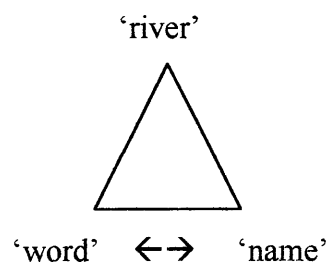
In terms of their extension these terms are therefore identical, that is to say, that

“...any two co-referring expressions can be intersubstituted anywhere *salva veritate*.”

(Evans: 1982, 9). However, this does not entail a semantic identity. The distinction is comparable to that in $(a = a)$ and $(a = b)$: where $(a = a)$ reflects a semantic identity and $(a = b)$ reflects an extensional identity.

0411 In this sense one may consider a particular from the extension of two such terms (‘name’ and ‘word’), for example ‘river’.

(D21)



‘River’ is a word and ‘river’ is a name such that the reference of both terms is identical, extensionally. Therefore, it is in this way that (‘word’ = ‘name’) and (‘name’ = ‘word’), as $(a = b)$, but these both differ from (‘word’ = ‘word’) and

(‘name’ = ‘name’), as ($a = a$). This point clearly focuses the central analysis of Augustine in the DM, that one must not only know what is being referred to but, crucially, one must know *how* it is being referred to. Strictly speaking, for Augustine to know *how* one is referring to something is actually to know *what* it is that is being referred to. That is to say, the object of reference is a mentally graspable item (formal in content)²⁸⁹ and this item is what is thought about and expressed linguistically, in sayable terms, by the speaker. So to know how a speaker is referring to an item is in effect to know what it is that the speaker is referring to²⁹⁰.

5.6.1. Word and Sound, Name and Thought.

0412 Augustine further clarifies the distinction between what is referred to by a word, or its extension (the *tantum*)²⁹¹, and how this referent is referred to, or its sense (the *significatio*)²⁹², by recourse to etymologising.

²⁸⁹ v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6.

²⁹⁰ This fact in Augustinian semantics will ultimately be fatal for language as a mode of teaching but not necessarily as a mode of communication (cf. § 8 and § 9).

²⁹¹ Adeodatus summarises the first section of the argument (DM 19-20) and in so doing describes the types of signs of reciprocal significance in the following terms: “*in hoc autem genere, quo inuicem se significant, quaedam non tantum, quaedam tantum, quaedam uero etiam idem ualere monstratum est*” (DM 20). Words which signify the same as each other quantitatively, or extensionally, are described as those which ‘*tantum...valere*’. For this reason Augustine’s concept of extension will be rendered by the term ‘*tantum*’, these words signify as much as each other in that every member of the class of one word is the same as the class of another - they are numerically, or quantitatively, identical. This passage (DM 20) is well discussed in a footnote in King’s translation, King: 1995, 120 n. 50.

²⁹² The terms ‘extension’, ‘intension’, ‘sense’, and ‘reference/meaning’ (in the Fregean sense) are all problematic translations for Augustine’s analysis of the distinction variously drawn by such terms. ‘Extension’ is in many respects least problematic for, in the sense that the extension is the class or set of items to which a term refers, it is acceptable to Augustine’s argument as presented in the DM. The Fregean analysis of ‘reference/meaning’ (*Bedeutung*) is problematic in that it can include concepts and so is not to be seen as the extension in any standard sense of the term. ‘Sense’ and ‘intension’ are broadly similar in that they denote the concept/description under which a particular extension falls. In the Augustinian approach one should perhaps consider the *tantum* or extension as the class of all items falling under a particular term (or terms, for, as discussed, different senses/intensions can correspond to the same extension). While the *significatio* or intension/sense is the comprehensible and sayable formal element whereby any member of an extension can be picked out and understood as such. In this sense, the Augustinian distinction of these two elements do to an extent collapse into one, the fact of this is due to the formal nature of the metaphysical background to his linguistic analysis.

Aug. omne, quod cum aliquo significato articulata uoce prorumpit, animaduertis ut opinor et aurem uerberare, ut sentiri, et memoriae mandari, ut nosci possit.

Ad. animaduerto.

Aug. duo ergo quaedam contingunt, cum aliquid tali uoce proferimus.

Ad. ita est.

Aug. quid? si horum duorum ex uno appellata sunt uerba ex altero nomina, uerba scilicet a uerberando, nomina uero a noscendo, ut illud primum ab auribus, hoc autem secundum ab animo uocari meruerit?

(12)

Words (*uerba*) are so called due to the effect they have on the ear (*aurem uerberare*), names (*nomina*) due to the effect they have on the mind (*nosci*). These etymologies introduce the crucial element, in any complete analysis of the semiotic relations at play in the communicative processes, namely, that of causality. How a particular word is understood *qua* word is due to its conceptual, or formally intelligible, relationship to the ear as sound and how a particular name is understood *qua* name is due to its conceptual, or formally intelligible, relationship to the mind as signification.

0413 It is clear that there is a causal link between the word and its reference. This link is the formal relation²⁹³ which holds among all members of a class and the formal relation which allows one not merely to grasp such a member but also to assent propositionally to it as such a member and to be able to describe it as such, *qua* sayable item, to others.

0414 The twofold classification into sound and signification parallels with that in the definition of *uerbum* (DM 8; 0214). *Vox* is parallel with *sentiri* while *significatus* is parallel with *nosci*, and there is the additional idea of the intelligible item being consigned to, and accessible from, the memory (*memoriae mandari*). The parallel between *significatus* and *nosci* reintroduces the idea that words have both an element relating to the ear, and one relating to the mind, that there is in effect an outer (uttered) word and an inner word (the word sounding within): the outer word enabling

one to perceive it, the inner enabling one to consign something to memory and know it. At this point the concept of signification is germane, for a word is an uttered sound which signifies something and it is knowing that to which a word signifies which is what constitutes knowing the word.

0415 It is now possible to draw out a number of factors relating to memory in the process involved in linguistic signs. The involvement of these processes are suggested as early as DM 2 and this passage can now, in the light of the intervening sections, be more fully understood.

A.: ...quamuis nullum edamus sonum, tamen, quia ipsa uerba cogitamus, nos intus apud animum loqui, sic quoque locutione nihil aliud agere quam commemorare, cum memoria, cui uerba inhaerent, ea reuoluendo facit uenire in mentem res ipsas, quarum signa sunt uerba.

(2)

The uttered word is related, by the speaker/hearer, to the word sounding within²⁹⁴, this is not the concept of the word but rather the subvocal word, which enables one to remember the word *qua* sound. The word, either vocal or subvocal, bears a signification, which one recalls via the vocal, subvocal, word and this signification is an intelligible item which one has stored in one's memory. The mental item, in turn, correlates to an particular item to which it directs (when the item is present) one's attention.

5.6.2. All Words are Names.

0416 The above discussion of extension (*tantum*) and sense (*significatio*) omitted to consider the one glaring problem in this distinction as presented in DM 12, namely the role of names in Augustine's argument. The problem is not fatal for the distinction

²⁹³ v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6.

of sense and extension *per se* but it does cause difficulties for it as presented by Augustine. The fact of the matter is that although it would seem obvious, and commonly acceptable, that all names are words, the same is by no means the case for the proposal that all words are names (or, nouns, to put the problem in the most extreme sense, available to the Latin speaker, for ‘*nomen*’)²⁹⁵. Adeodatus, correctly, raises this issue and states that he will not concede the point until Augustine can show that all words are indeed names just as all names are words.

Ad. concedam cum ostenderis, quomodo recte possimus omnia uerba nomina dicere.

(13)

0417 The issue concerning all words being names and the relation of these terms to the wider distinction of extension (*tantum*) and sense (*significatio*) occurs due to the fact that Augustine is specifically concerned with the question of knowledge acquisition and the role of language in this process. It is on account of this specific concern of Augustine’s in the DM that the problematic example of *nomen* is used in the argument, for the extension/sense distinction is introduced as part of a wider concern. This concern involves the attempt to disambiguate linguistic (and semiotic) items so that one may achieve the point where a term may clearly and unambiguously refer to its *significatum* and be so understood by the sign receiver.

0418 Augustine embarks on a series of five arguments in an attempt to clarify the point that all words are names. The position adopted reveals itself to be distinctly Stoic in its approach and employs what is most plausibly interpreted as the Stoic

²⁹⁴ How this relation occurs must be considered in the light of Augustine’s approach to language learning. For discussion of this see below (§ 8.1.3).

²⁹⁵ In the diagram above (D21, 0411) it is clear that the model makes sense with an unproblematic linguistic item such as a ‘river’ but this unproblematic term begs the question as to how Augustine might explain less clear cases such as verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, etc., for it seems rather strained to describe a conjunction, such as ‘and’, as a name (or, more extremely, as a noun) and if it is a name, what exactly is the item which it purports to name.

theory of ambiguity²⁹⁶. Augustine has progressively refined his classification of signs until the point as it now stands where the final distinction between terms is their sense, or signification, and in defending the use of '*nomen*', when considered with '*uerbum*', as an example of this he gives consideration to the final level of disambiguation of linguistic signs, namely, the question as to the possibility that, when stripped of all extraneous ambiguities, a term can be understood unambiguously in terms of its signification and the reference of that signification.

0419 In the process of developing this argument Augustine uses the primary example of '*nomen*', both for the specific purpose of supporting the sense/extension distinction, and for the wider purpose of attempting to clarify this final level of possible ambiguity in linguistic signs. '*Nomen*' is the primary example for the reason that this final level of ambiguity turns on the use-mention distinction (or a form of it), a distinction which, as will be seen, itself depends upon the role of naming in linguistic acts. '*Nomen*' is also a particularly well chosen example due to the fact that it both serves as a term which can be used (when considered with *uerbum*) to reveal the secondary level of ambiguity in linguistic signs, namely that of the extension/sense distinction, while it also raises the question as to whether all words are names and so introduces the final level of potential ambiguity, namely that concerning the sense of particular terms.

0420 The philosophical background of the following discussion of '*nomen*', and the subsequent development of Augustine's thesis over the second half of the DM, concerns the Stoic classification of fallacies. In particular, Augustine is concerned with that class involving ambiguity²⁹⁷.

²⁹⁶ v. *inf.* § 6.1.

ἀμφιβολία δέ ἐστι λέξις δύο ἢ καὶ πλείονα πράγματα
σημαίνουσα λεκτικῶς καὶ κυρίως καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἔθος,
ὥσθ' ἅμα τὰ πλείονα ἐκδέξασθαι κατὰ ταύτην τὴν λέξιν.
(Diogenes Laertius 7.62)

0421 The related classes of ambiguity which are of concern to Augustine in the DM are those relating to simple and complex expressions²⁹⁸.

τὰς δὲ διαφορὰς τῶν λεγομένων ἀμφιβολιῶν αὐτὰς ληπτέον...
δευτέρα δὲ παρὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἀπλοῖς <ὁμωνυμίαν>, οἷον
"ἄνδρεῖος", ἥ γὰρ χιτῶν ἢ ἄνθρωπός· τρίτον δὲ παρὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς
συνθέτοις ὁμωνυμίαν, οἷον "ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν". ἀμφίβολος γὰρ ὁ
λόγος, εἴτε τὴν οὐσίαν εἴτε τὴν πτῶσιν εἶναι σημαίνει.
(Galen, *soph.* 4)

Augustine will, however, concern himself primarily with the first class (the second - δευτέρα - in Galen's list), namely simple expressions. However, the manner in which he concerns himself with such expressions is seen rather in Galen's example given for complex expressions, for what makes the complex expression is the ambiguity concerning the question as to whether the term 'ἄνθρωπος' signifies the external, extra-linguistic, item or signifies the word itself. Such ambiguities involving simple and complex expressions would seem to concern the same central ambiguity: with simple expressions there are two, or more, possible significations for the ambiguous term; while for complex expressions, an ambiguous term, or string of ambiguous terms, is not disambiguated by context²⁹⁹ and, therefore, for such expressions also there may be more than one possible signification. For example, "Man is" is ambiguous in a way in which "Man is a three letter word" is not.

²⁹⁷ The following discussion relies on the excellent study of Stoic treatment of ambiguity by Atherton for its analysis of the Stoic position and to some extent also for Augustine's position.: Atherton: 1993.

²⁹⁸ Simple expressions will be considered primarily due to the fact that they are central to Augustine's wider concerns, and the requirements of his argument in the DM, however, complex expressions will be referred to as necessary.

²⁹⁹ Consideration will be given to the important term 'context', and its application, in due course.

0422 The treatment of such ambiguities ultimately depends on Chrysippus³⁰⁰ and a consideration of relevant statements attested to Chrysippus will assist in understanding the import of Augustine's thesis concerning '*nomina*'. In addition, as argued in Atherton (1993, 37-8; 289-310), it will be shown that Augustine will in turn assist in making sense of the difficult and fragmentary remains of the Stoic treatment of what may be termed autonymous ambiguity³⁰¹ and its relation to the statement attested to Chrysippus that every word is by nature ambiguous.

Chrysippus ait omne uerbum ambiguum natura esse, quoniam ex eodem duo uel plura accipi possunt.

(Aulus Gellius 11.12.1)³⁰²

0423 The five arguments employed by Augustine concerning the nominal aspect of all words will now be considered. The arguments are: the argument from pronouns; that from verbs; that from foreign languages; that from authority; and that from logical form.

5.6.2.1. Argument from Pronouns.

0424 The standard definition³⁰³ given in schools (*grammatico reddidisti*) for a pronoun is cited such that it is used in place of a noun/name but with less full signification.

Aug. facile est; nam credo te accepisse ac tenere pronomen dictum, quod pro ipso nomine ualeat, rem tamen notet minus plena significatione quam nomen.

³⁰⁰ Chrysippus' interest in fallacy in general and ambiguity in particular can be seen from the list of works on logic attested in Diogenes Laertius (7.192-198).

³⁰¹ v. *inf.* § 5.6.2.5.

³⁰² Cf. also Cicero, *inv.* 2.117; Quintillian, *inst.* 7.9.1; Augustine, DD 8-9.

³⁰³ Cf. M. Valerius Probus, *gramm.* 131.1.

*nam ut opinor ita definiuit ille, quem grammatico reddidisti: pronomen est pars orationis, quae pro ipso posita nomine minus quidem plene idem tamen significat.*³⁰⁴

(13)

From this definition it is asserted that pronouns can only replace names.

Aug. uides igitur secundum hanc definitionem nullis nisi nominibus seruire et pro his solis poni posse pronomina, uelut cum dicimus hic uir, ipse rex, eadem mulier, hoc aurum, illud argentum, hic, ipse, eadem, hoc, illud pronomina esse, uir, rex, mulier, aurum, argentum nomina, quibus plenius quam illis pronomibus res significatae sunt.

(13)

As pronouns can be shown to replace words such as conjunctions, it is therefore argued that it follows that these conjunctions must also be names.

Aug. tu ergo nunc mihi paucas coniunctiones quaslibet enuntia.

Ad. et, que, at, atque.

Aug. haec omnia, quae dixisti, non tibi uidentur esse nomina?

Ad. non omnino.

Aug. ego saltem tibi recte locutus uideor, cum dicerem: haec omnia, quae dixisti?

Ad. recte prorsus et iam intellego, quam mirabiliter ostenderis me nomina enuntiasse; non enim aliter de his recte dici potuisset haec omnia.

(13)

0425 Adeodatus states as a possible objection that ‘haec’ can refer to sets of words and therefore ‘all these’ (*haec omnia*) can be said of a set of, for example, conjunctions because the pronoun is in effect a periphrasis for ‘all these words’ (*haec uerba omnia*). Consequently, as ‘words’ is a name, the pronoun (*haec*) was attached to the implicit name, ‘words’.

Ad. ...sed enim uereor adhuc, ne propterea mihi recte locutus uidearis, quod has quattuor coniunctiones etiam uerba esse non nego, ut ideo de his recte dici potuerit haec omnia, quoniam recte dicitur haec uerba omnia. si autem a me quaeras, quae sit pars orationis uerba, nihil aliud respondebo quam nomen. quare huic nomini fortasse pronomen adiunctum est, ut illa recta esset locutio tua.

(13)

³⁰⁴ This definition is virtually identical with that given in Augustine’s *de grammatica: ars pro fratrum mediocritate breuiata*: “*pronomen est pars orationis quae pro ipso nomine posita minus quidem bene*

5.6.2.2. Argument from Verbs.

0426 Augustine proceeds to focus his argument in a manner which does not concern the formal appearance of the word or its sound but rather is concerned with the word's signification. Words consist of a sound (and letters) which signify something. All words have a meaning and thus for Augustine there is a 'thing'³⁰⁵ which they signify. A word is what something is called, or named, and so all words are, in this sense, names.

Aug. uerba certe sono et litteris constant.

Ad. ita est.

Aug. ergo, ut ea potissimum auctoritate utamur, quae nobis carissima est, cum ait Paulus apostolus: «non erat in Christo est et non, sed est in illo erat», non opinor putandum est tres istas litteras, quas enuntiamus, cum dicimus est, fuisse in Christo, sed illud potius, quod istis tribus litteris significatur.

Ad. uerum dicis.

(14)

0427 Words are what one 'calls' what one signifies. The sound, and letters, of the word are irrelevant to this point. Augustine demonstrates this through the use of the relative clause where its antecedent *x* functions as a name: the answer to the question 'What do you call what was in him?' is 'It is called *x*'. Therefore, if '*est*' was in him, it is called '*est*'.³⁰⁶ Augustine employs the verbal form to argue that the formalities (of sound and letters) of language do not matter, as what matters is that all words signify something and that it is this something which is in fact named.

Aug. intellegis igitur eum qui ait: «est in illo erat», nihil aliud dixisse quam: est appellatur, quod in illo erat, tamquam si dixisset uirtus in illo erat, non utique dixisse acciperetur nisi uirtus appellatur, quod in illo erat, ne duas istas syllabas, quas enuntiamus, cum dicimus uirtus, et non illud, quod his duabus syllabis significatur, in illo fuisse arbitraremur.

idem tamen significat." (gramm. 3.1).

³⁰⁵ As discussed above (§ 5.2.1.2.5.6) the status of this 'thing' is formal or at least intelligible.

³⁰⁶ It should be noted that in the phrase '*est in illo erat*' from 2 Corinthians 1:19 '*est*' translates the Greek '*ναι*', and therefore means 'yes'. There is nothing to suggest that Augustine understands '*est*' in this context as 'being' rather than 'yes'. The term 'being' is used above for the purpose of emphasising the point being made by Augustine, namely that '*est*' is, grammatically, the verbal form.

(14)

For what one calls something is what it is named.

Aug. quid illud nonne intellegis etiam nihil interesse, utrum quisque dicat uirtus appellatur an uirtus nominatur?

Ad. manifestum est.

Aug. ergo ita manifestum est nihil interesse, utrum quis dicat est appellatur an est nominatur quod in illo erat.

Ad. uideo et hic nihil distare.

(14)

0428 A name is that by which something is named, and so it follows that the verb

‘to be’ (*est*) as used in this context is functioning as a name.

Aug. itane tu non uides nomen esse id, quod res aliqua nominatur?

Ad. hoc plane nihil certius uideo.

Aug. uides ergo est nomen esse, siquidem illud, quod erat in Christo, est nominatur.

(14)

0429 Formal grammatical descriptions are irrelevant to the point being made by

Augustine. Reason is the authority applied to the issue.

Aug. at si ex te quaererem, quae sit pars orationis est, non opinor nomen, sed uerbum esse diceres, cum id ratio etiam nomen esse docuerit.

Ad. ita est prorsus ut dicis.

(14)

0430 In this discussion Augustine has not only shown Adeodatus that one should not simply employ grammatical description as a solution to the issue at hand (that all words are names) but has, in addition, introduced a first level of ambiguity for single terms. This ambiguity is the mention element in the modern use-mention distinction, for Augustine stresses the fact that he is not concerned with the sound, or the three letters e-s-t, of the word ‘*est*’³⁰⁷ but rather he is concerned with the fact that it signifies and therefore, if it signifies, it must signify something, and is then the name of that something.

³⁰⁷ As suggested in Burnyeat (1987, 11), the *dictio/uerbum* distinction is possibly a discovery of Augustine’s. Much of the following discussion of Augustine’s treatment of the use-mention distinction is indebted to Burnyeat: 1987.

0431 It will be preferable to use the expression *suppositio materialis*, as used in mediaeval logical theory by the schoolmen³⁰⁸, on account of the greater degree of complexity exhibited in Augustine's approach to ambiguity in single terms than the modern use-mention distinction allows for³⁰⁹. The distinction made by the expression *suppositio materialis* is that in the sentence 'Dog is monosyllabic' what is talked about is the "very sign material" (Christensen: 1967, 363), the three letter sound [dog]. There is no sense in this example that one is attempting to use the word 'dog' as an utterance with some significance and as a sign which signifies something beyond itself, such as the class of dogs or a particular member of the class of dogs.

0432 Augustine will be seen to employ the following distinctions.

(D1)	<i>uerbum</i>	→	<i>suppositio materialis</i>	→	mention
(D2)	<i>dictio</i>	→	<i>suppositio semantica</i> ³¹⁰		
(D3)	<i>dictio</i>	→	<i>suppositio formalis</i>	→	use ³¹¹ .

5.6.2.3. Argument from Foreign Languages.

0433 One can ask what another language names anything that we name by a part of speech in our language. Taken in isolation this argument would appear to be a gross over-simplification of the act of naming for it is rather like asking 'What verbal sound do you use for x?'. This over-simplification suggests a picture of language such as that attributed to Augustine by Wittgenstein (*PI* 1; *BB* p.77), where sentences are seen

³⁰⁸ The mediaeval distinction between *suppositio materialis* and *suppositio formalis* may have originated in a combination of Stoic and Aristotelian theory (Atherton: 1993, 288).

³⁰⁹ For a discussion of the over simplification introduced by the use-mention distinction cf. Christensen: 1967.

³¹⁰ A term introduced by Christensen: 1967, 363.

³¹¹ These distinctions will be expanded upon below (§ 5.6.2.5 and § 6). The use-mention dichotomy is here used to provide a general clarification of, and parallel for the Latin terms but, as argued by Christensen (1967), this terminology is inadequate beyond any general application, for mention is essentially simply another form of use.

simply as strings of names, and where there is no suggestion of, for example, Aristotle's sub-categoricals³¹². However, in light of the previous two arguments (from pronouns and from verbs) it is clear that Augustine is certainly not making this simplification but is rather making the more subtle point that all words are independently significant, or meaningful. To this extent he is aligning himself with the Stoic position, that every word in fact signifies something, and against the Aristotelian position whereby this can only be asserted of nouns and verbs while all other words are co-significant (cf. Plutarch, *quaest. Plat.* 10.1)³¹³.

0434 In the examples cited to demonstrate that one can ask what another language names any part of speech Augustine specifically uses seven of the eight parts of speech (pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition, and interjection)³¹⁴. The part which is missing is the name/noun which, as an obvious example of a name, can be left out of Augustine's list³¹⁵.

Aug. ...ratio, qua demonstratur omnibus partibus orationis significari aliquid et ex eo appellari; si autem appellari, et nominari, si nominari nomine utique nominari quod in diuersis linguis facillime iudicatur. quis enim non uideat, si quaeram, quid Graeci nominent, quod nos nominamus quis, responderi mihi τίς, quid Graeci nominent, quod nos nominamus uolo, responderi mihi θέλω, quid Graeci nominent, quod nos nominamus bene, responderi mihi καλῶς, quid Graeci nominent, quod nos nominamus scriptum, responderi mihi τὸ γεγραμμένον, quid Graeci nominent, quod nos nominamus et, responderi καί, quid Graeci nominent, quod nos nominamus ab, responderi ἀπό, quid Graecinominent, quod nos nominamus heu, responderi οἶ. atque in his omnibus partibus orationis, quas nunc enumeraui, recte loqui eum, qui sic interroget quod, nisi nomina essent, fieri non posset. hac ergo ratione Paulum apostolum recte locutum esse, cum remotis omnium eloquentium auctoritatibus obtinere possimus, quid opus est quaerere, cuius persona sententia nostra fulciatur?

(15)

³¹² The broader implications of a Wittgensteinian critique, as introduced above (0150), will be discussed in due course (v. *inf.* § 7, § 8.1.3, § 9.2, and § 9.3.2).

³¹³ For a fuller discussion of these issues and sources for them, cf. Atherton: 1993, 304-310; Frede: 1978; Graeser, in Rist: 1978.

³¹⁴ "partes orationis sunt octo nomen pronomen uerbum aduerbium participium coniunctio praepositio interiectio" (*gramm.* 1.2).

³¹⁵ This point is made by King: 1995, 114 n.41.

5.6.2.4. Argument from Authority.

0435 The question of the status of arguments intended to convince through authority was considered by Augustine with reference to his use of the Pauline example (DM 15) and it was decided that one should prefer the use of reason to that of authority

Aug. minus enim tibi uidetur idonea remotis auctoritatibus ipsa ratio, qua demonstratur omnibus partibus orationis significari aliquid... ?

(15)

Nevertheless, authority is introduced as a support reason, in that Cicero can be shown to call a preposition, or adverb, a name.

*Aug. ...sed ne quis tardior aut impudentior nondum cedat, asseratque nisi illis auctoribus, quibus uerborum leges consensu omnium tribuuntur, nullo modo esse cessurum, quid in Latina lingua excellentius Cicerone inueniri potest? at hic in suis nobilissimis orationibus, quas Verrinas uocant, coram praepositionem, siue illo loco aduerbium sit, nomen appellauit.*³¹⁶

(16)

5.6.2.5. Argument from Propositional Form.

0436 The argument from propositional form is the final, and in many ways most interesting, approach used to demonstrate that all words are names. As can now be seen, the proposal that all words are names is essentially an elaboration on the thesis that all words signify and that this general statement amounts to the fact that every word is, non-autonomously, significant. This is to say, a word may be used³¹⁷ to name

³¹⁶ “*uiditisne totum hoc nomen coram ubi facit delatum esse in litura?*” Cicero, *Verr.* 2.104.

³¹⁷ The idea that the various types of *suppositio* are ‘uses’ is a modern idea (introduced by Christensen: 1967). Both Augustine and the Stoics worked with the idea that words *signify* variously rather than are *used* variously. However, due to the fact that “... words signify[ing] themselves... could be redescribed as their being used to signify themselves... [and this] would surely not constitute a real distinction for a Stoic dialectician” (Atherton, 1993, 325) the terminology of usage has been employed in the following discussion. The reason for this is so as to avoid any implication of a use-mention distinction while also clarifying the various modes of signification which Augustine introduces into the DM.

itself, autonomously³¹⁸, as a material sign (the use of ‘dog’ to name itself as a three letter sound) but also may be used, non-autonomously, to name, or signify, something beyond itself (the use of ‘dog’ to name a domesticated canine mammal). This is the straightforward use-mention distinction, or rather the *suppositio formalis* and *suppositio materialis* distinction.

0437 Augustine proceeds to demonstrate that all words are non-autonomously significant by a method rather similar to the Stoic procedure of demonstrating and isolating the significance of connectives such as ‘if’ and ‘because’ by determining the truth-conditions of propositions (Diogenes Laertius 7.71-74)³¹⁹.

0438 A complete proposition (*sententia/pronuntiatum*³²⁰) consists of a name/noun and a verb and is what is true or false.

Aug. ...tradunt enim nobilissimi disputationum magistri nomine et uerbo plenam constare sententiam, quae adfirmari negarique possit, quod genus idem Tullius quodam loco pronuntiatum uocat. et cum uerbi tertia persona est, nominatiuum cum ea casum nominis aiunt esse oportere, et recte aiunt. quod mecum si consideres, uelut cum dicimus homo sedet, equus currit, agnoscis ut opinor duo pronuntiata esse.
Ad. agnosco.

(16)

0439 Incomplete ‘propositions’³²¹ (‘...sedet’ or ‘...currit’) demand the question as to what is the name, or subject, so as to be complete. It is essential to propositional form to complete a proposition by adding a name to the verb so as to enable the proposition to be true or false.

³¹⁸ The additional autonomy of *suppositio semantica* considered by Augustine in the DM will be discussed below (0447-0451).

³¹⁹ The compatibility of Augustine’s thesis that all words are names with the Stoic approach for determining the meaning of connectives through the truth-conditions of propositions is suggested by Burnyeat: 1987, 11.

³²⁰ Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.14., translating the Stoic term ὀξίωμα.

³²¹ To properly be a proposition there must be completion. It is for this reason that Augustine avoids speaking of an incomplete proposition but rather of ‘completing the proposition’ (*implere pronuntiatum*).

Aug. cernis in singulis singula esse nina, in uno homo, in altero equus, et uerba singula, in uno sedet, in altero currit.

Ad. cerno.

Aug. ergo si dicerem sedet tantum aut currit tantum, recte a me quaereres quis uel quid, ut responderem homo uel equus uel animal uel quodlibet aliud, quod posset nomen redditum uerbo implere pronuntiatum, id est illam sententiam, quae adfirmari et negari potest.

(16)

0440 That Augustine is following Stoic procedure in his analysis of the thesis that all words are significant (non-autonomously) is enforced by the specifically Stoic nature of his approach to nature of propositions. Augustine firstly clarifies his use of ‘*sententia*’ by means of reference to Cicero’s translation (*pronuntiatum*) of the Stoic term ‘ἀξιωμα’ (*Tusc.* 1.14). This clearly implies that he is using ‘*sententia*’ as a translation of ‘ἀξιωμα’. This proposition (*sententia*) is complete (*plena*) when it consists of a name and a verb (*nomine et uerbo*) and is incomplete when it is a verb, in the third person, which lacks a subject (*recte a me quaereres quis uel quid*). To become a complete proposition the verb requires a name (*nomen redditum uerbo implere pronuntiatum*) in the nominative case (*cum uerbi tertia persona est, nominatiuum cum ea casum nominis... esse oportere*). An example of a complete proposition is ‘*homo sedet*’ or ‘*equus currit*’ and an incomplete one would be ‘*... sedet*’ or ‘*... currit*’ which would require something like ‘*homo*’ or ‘*equus*’ or ‘*animal*’ to be complete. Finally, when a proposition is complete it has a truth value (*illam [plenam] sententiam... adfirmari et negari potest*).

0441 The Stoic ἀξιωμα is formed from a complete λεκτόν, and this completion is achieved when a predicate is attached to a nominative case.

ἔστι δὲ τὸ κατηγορήμα τὸ κατὰ τινος ἀγορευόμενον ἢ πρᾶγμα συντακτὸν περὶ τινος ἢ τινῶν... ἢ λεκτὸν ἔλλιπὲς συντακτὸν ὀρθῇ πτώσει πρὸς ἀξιώματος γένεσιν.

(Diogenes Laertius 7.64)

The proposition, or more correctly the sayable, can be said to be incomplete when its predicate lacks a subject and demands the question 'Who?' or 'What?'.

ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τῶν σημαινομένων τόπῳ τέτακται ὁ περὶ λεκτῶν καὶ αὐτοτελῶν καὶ ἀξιωμάτων καὶ συλλογισμῶν λόγος καὶ ὁ περὶ ἐλλιπῶν τε καὶ κατηγορημάτων καὶ ὀρθῶν καὶ ὑπτίων... τῶν δὲ λεκτῶν τὰ μὲν λέγουσιν εἶναι αὐτοτελεῖ οἱ Στωικοί, τὰ δ' ἐλλιπῆ. ἐλλιπῆ μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τὰ ἀναπάρτιστον ἔχοντα τὴν ἐκφοράν, οἷον "γράφει". ἐπιζητοῦμεν γάρ, "τίς;" αὐτοτελεῖ δ' ἐστὶ τὰ ἀπληρτισμένην ἔχοντα τὴν ἐκφοράν, οἷον "γράφει Σωκράτης". ἐν μὲν οὖν τοῖς ἐλλιπέσι λεκτοῖς τέτακται τὰ κατηγορήματα, ἐν δὲ τοῖς αὐτοτελέσι τὰ ἀξιώματα καὶ οἱ συλλογισμοὶ καὶ τὰ ἐρωτήματα καὶ τὰ πύσματα.

(Diogenes Laertius 7.63)

A proposition is a complete λεκτόν and as such has truth value.

...τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς ἀσώματόν ἐστιν (ἀξίωμα γάρ ἐστι καὶ λεκτόν)...
(Sextus Empiricus, *PH* 2.81)

...περὶ τῷ σημαινομένῳ τὸ ἀληθὲς τε καὶ ψεῦδος ὑπεστήσαντο... οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς... σημαινόμενον δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ ὑπ' [τῆς φωνῆς] δηλούμενον... ἀσώματον... [ἐστὶ] τὸ σημαινόμενον πρᾶγμα, καὶ λεκτόν, ὅπερ ἀληθὲς τε γίνεται ἢ ψεῦδος.
(Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12)

0442 With the basic facts established that a complete proposition requires a name and a verb Augustine can move on to demonstrate that all words are indeed names and therefore are all independently, and non-autonomously, significant.

0443 The proposal is forwarded that on seeing something at a distance, and while still unsure of what it is, one were to say 'Because it is a man, it is an animal'³²². This statement is altered by Adeodatus to the more correct 'If it is a man, it is an animal'³²³. Therefore, Augustine states: if is acceptable and because is unacceptable³²⁴. The conclusion is that there are two complete propositions: 'If is acceptable' (*placet si*) and 'Because is unacceptable' (*displicet quia*). The verbal

³²² The Stoic inferential proposition (παράσυννημμένον...ἀξίωμα): Diogenes Laertius 7.71.

³²³ The Stoic hypothetical proposition (ἀξίωμα...συννημμένον): Diogenes Laertius 7.71.

elements in these propositions are ‘...*placet*’ and ‘...*displicet*’ and so the nominal elements must be ‘*si*’ and ‘*quia*’. Therefore, it is possible to fashion a complete proposition by adding an adverbial conjunction to a verb, and so these adverbial conjunctions are seen to be names.

Aug. adtende cetera, et finge nos uidere aliquid longius et incertum habere, utrum animal sit an saxum uel quid aliud, meque tibi dicere: quia homo est, animal est, nonne temere dicerem?

Ad. temere omnino, sed non temere plane dices: si homo est, animal est.

Aug. recte dicis. itaque in tua locutione placet mihi si, placet et tibi; utrique autem nostrum in mea displicet quia.

Ad. assentior.

Aug. uide iam, utrum istae duae sententiae plena pronuntiata sint: placet si, displicet quia.

Ad. plena omnino.

(16)

0444 As these conjunctions have been shown to be names so too can the same demonstration be carried out with all of the other parts of speech.

Aug. age nunc dic mihi, quae ibi sint uerba, quae nomina.

Ad. uerba ibi uideo esse placet et displicet, nomina uero quid aliud quam si et quia?

Aug. has ergo duas coniunctiones etiam nomina esse satis probatum est.

Ad. prorsus satis.

Aug. potesne ipse per te in aliis partibus orationis hoc idem ad eandem regulam docere?

Ad. possum.

(16)

0445 In DM 3, with the introduction of the line from Vergil (*Aen.* 2.659) for analysis³²⁵, Augustine had initiated the thesis that all words are signs and therefore signify something. The argument deriving from the discussion of the Vergil sentence had proposed that even conjunctions (*si*) and prepositions (*ex*) are significant. The initial attempt to clarify this thesis foundered due to the fact that the implication was that to signify something is equivalent to referring to something and therefore the

³²⁴ Although it may, following modern convention, seem practical to insert quotation marks around ‘if’ and ‘because’, this convention is specifically not adopted so as to avoid confusing Augustine’s point with a straightforward use/mention distinction.

lengthy, and informative, discussion of ostension was introduced. The referential approach to signification, or meaning, has been progressively shown over the course of the discussion (DM 3-16) to be insufficient, from Augustine's standpoint, as a theory of meaning. All words are names in that they name something, however what they name, or refer to, is in fact themselves as significant, or meaningful, items. Augustine's theory of meaning is perhaps best described as an intensional theory of semantics in that the signification, y , of any possible word, x , is an intelligible and, therefore, mental item³²⁶. The signification may have an external referent, such as 'this door', but due to the formal nature of the perception and comprehension of such items the meaning is best described as intensional in that what is grasped of an object, even a material one which is here and now, is its intelligible Form. The same point holds for universals³²⁷ in that they are derived from particulars. Also, as concerns terms such as 'nothing' (*nihil*) or 'from' (*ex*) these are, in the case of terms like 'nothing' (which is clearly not a Form), a mental abstraction from an intelligible state of affairs and, in the case of terms like 'from', a mental correlate to an intelligible state of affairs. In all of these examples the significant, or meaningful, item is the linguistic correlate to an intelligible item which is available internally, and memorially, to the thinking subject (whether that be sign transmitter or sign receiver).

0446 In discussing words as names Augustine wants to focus upon the fact that all words have independent meaning which can be demonstrated. He is not concerned with the material form of words but rather with the fact that they all have independent signification, or meaning, and that it is this meaning which may be said to be named.

³²⁵ It is significant that this was standard practice in the rhetorical schools of the period (in which Augustine had been educated and had, until recently, been a teacher himself).

³²⁶ v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6.

³²⁷ That is universals *qua* conceptual/immanent Forms.

Aug. ... non opinor putandum est tres istas litteras, quas enuntiamus, cum dicimus est, fuisse in Christo, sed illud potius, quod istis tribus litteris significatur.
Ad. uerum dicis.

(14)

This, however, does not suggest that all words are semantically equivalent for there are clearly differences, as is noted in grammatical vocabulary, between different types of words.

Aug. ... et speciale dicimus nomen, quod inter octo partes orationis ita est, ut alias septem non contineat.

(17)

The concern with words as names is here to demonstrate the independent significance of all words and to elucidate what it means for all words to signify something (DM 3). Every word is therefore shown to have significance and to have a linguistic function such as is correlated to something, or to some state of affairs or to some abstraction from some state of affairs, in reality.

0447 In the argument from propositional form it is shown that the statement with ‘because’ (‘Because it is a man, it is an animal’) differs from that with ‘if’ (‘If it is a man, it is an animal’) in that they reflect different mental relationships to a given state of affairs and that these different mental relations are signified by the different semantic values of each term. The independence of the signification of each term is demonstrated by Augustine’s use of the notion of the complete proposition and each is shown to be semantically graspable in isolation from the linguistic context in which it occurred³²⁸. Each term is, therefore, intelligible as an independent item. The manner of demonstrating this fact by means of logical propositions demonstrates that,

³²⁸ The question of context is crucial to any discussion of the issue of independent, non-autonomous, significance. However, although terms such as ‘if’ are better understood, semantically, in context, Augustine is at pains to demonstrate their semantic independence and therefore avoid the inclination, when describing such terms in any given linguistic context, to make the error, as Augustine (and the Stoics) saw it, of ascribing (as the Peripatetics) the status of co-signification to such terms. The question of context will be considered in due course (§ 6).

although each word has an independent meaning, this meaning actually is only fully understood within their relational connections within sentences. The way in which such terms are significant, and what might be termed their function, is only seen within the context of sentences³²⁹.

0448 There can therefore be seen to be three instances of any word. These instances can be seen with reference to the following examples³³⁰.

- (1) If it is a man, it is an animal.
- (2) If is acceptable in example (1).
- (3) If is a monosyllable.

In (1) the term 'if' is straightforwardly used as a meaningfully uttered sign which points to something beyond itself, namely the concept of doubt. This term is the Augustinian *dictio* (DD 5.62-64) and may be described as being in *suppositio formalis*. In (2) the term 'if' is used so as to signify itself as a meaningful utterance which points to its own meaning, or rather to its sound *and* meaning. This term is also the Augustinian *dictio* (DD5.62-64), however it is used differently this context as it is used to signify itself as meaningful utterance. A useful way in which to distinguish this use from that of the *dictio* may be to imply the terminology used by Augustine himself and to define this usage as *nomen* in that it refers, primarily, to that which affects the mind, namely the signification (DM 12). This use may be described as being in *suppositio semantica*. Finally, in (3) the term 'if' is used to signify itself as sign material, namely sound (or letters). This term is the Augustinian *uerbum*, in its technical sense (DD 5.31-32; 5.59-60), and may be described as being in *suppositio materialis*.

³²⁹ Cf. Burnyeat: 1987, 11-12.

³³⁰ Although examples of a more straightforward nature could be found, 'if' has been preserved to make the connection with Augustine's argument more obvious. Also, the modern convention of

0449 All words, it can therefore be argued, name their own meanings or themselves as meaningful utterances (DM 20), which is not the same as the autonymous use of a word to name itself as sign material. The autonymous use in *suppositio semantica* supports the thesis that all words are independently significant and allows one to talk about language in the full sense of meaningful utterance³³¹, while the autonymous use in *suppositio materialis* does nothing for, and in fact may be used to contradict, the thesis that all words are independently significant and does little in facilitating discussion of language in the sense of *uerbum* as defined in DM 8 but only actually facilitates discussion of *uerba* in the narrower sense as given in DD 5.17-50.

0450 The five arguments developed by Augustine (DM 13-16) were intended firstly to distinguish the use in *suppositio materialis* from the other uses, which employ signification, and secondly to distinguish the use in *suppositio formalis* from that in *suppositio semantica*. With these distinctions clarified Augustine will now be better able to develop the Chrysippean thesis that all words are ambiguous³³².

0451 The classification, introduced above (0432), of different types of usage of words determined by these arguments can now be completed.

(D1) *uerbum* → *suppositio materialis* → use (*qua* material mention)

(D2) *nomen* → *suppositio semantica* → use (*qua* semantic mention)

(D3) *dictio* → *suppositio formalis* → use

marking off the mention of words with single quotation marks is avoided here as the use-mention distinction is not strictly relevant in this context.

³³¹ “*uerbum...quod cum aliquo significatu articulata uoce profertur.*” (DM 8).

³³² v. *inf.* § 6.1.1.

5.6.3. Reciprocal Signs Completed.

0452 After establishing the distinction between words with the same extension (*tantum*)³³³ but with different sense (*significatio*), such as *nomen/uerbum*³³⁴, and establishing the nominal aspect of all words Augustine proceeds to the final classification of signs signified by signs, namely those with the same extension (*tantum*) and sense (*significatio*).

0453 The words *nomen* and *uocabulum* ('term') signify themselves, each other, and all the other parts of speech.

Aug. transeamus ergo hinc et iam dic mihi, utrum, sicut omnia uerba nomina et omnia nomina uerba esse comperimus, ita tibi et omnia nomina uocabula et omnia uocabula nomina esse uideantur.

Ad. plane inter haec quid distet praeter diuersum syllabarum sonum non uideo.

*Aug. nec ego interim resisto, quamquam non desint, qui etiam significatione ista discernunt*³³⁵, *quorum sententiam modo considerare non opus est. sed certe animaduertis ad ea iam signa nos peruenisse, quae se inuicem significant nulla praeter sonum distantia et quae se ipsa significant cum ceteris omnibus partibus orationis.*

(17)

'Name' is here to be taken in the broad sense considered in the discussion above and in this sense it is equivalent to 'term' (*uocabulum*).

Aug. non ergo intellegis et nomen uocabulo et uocabulum nomine significari et ita, ut praeter sonum litterarum nihil intersit, quantum ad generale nomen attinet; nam et speciale dicimus nomen, quod inter octo partes orationis ita est, ut alias septem non contineat.

Ad. intellego.

Aug. at hoc est quod dixi sese inuicem significare uocabulum et nomen.

(17)

These words signify themselves as other words such as *coniunctio* do not.

Aug. quid? ipsum nomen, id est sonum istum duabus syllabis expressum, si ex te quaeram, quid appelles, nonne recte mihi respondebis nomen?

Ad. recte.

³³³ For the use of '*tantum*' as extension v. *sup.* 0412 n.291.

³³⁴ Cf. also *coloratum/uisibile* (DM 12).

³³⁵ Cf. Cledonius, *gramm.* (Keil) p.351-3; Donatus, *gramm.* (Keil), p.373,5.

Aug. num ita se significat hoc signum, quod quattuor syllabis enuntiamus, cum dicimus coniunctio? hoc enim nomen inter illa, quae significat, numerari non potest.

Ad. accipio

Aug. id est, quod dictum est nomen se ipsum significare cum aliis, quae significat; quod etiam de uocabulo per te ipsum licet intellegas.

(18)

0454 However, as *nomen* can be used both generally and specifically but *uocabulum* cannot, this suggests that there is in fact a difference between them.

Ad. iam facile est. sed illud mihi nunc uenit in mentem nomen et generaliter et specialiter dici, uocabulum autem inter octo partes orationis non accipi. quare hoc quoque inter se praeter diuersum sonum differre arbitror.

(18)

0455 Finally it is proposed that equivalent words in different languages, such as ‘*nomen*’ and ‘ὄνομα’, demonstrate absolute reciprocity. These terms therefore exhibit the same extension (*tantum*) and sense (*significatio*) in that there is no difference between them other than their sound.

Aug. quid? nomen et onoma distare inter se aliquid putas praeter sonum, quo etiam linguae discernuntur Latina et Graeca?

Ad. hic uero nihil aliud intellego.

(18)

This claim is clearly problematic for although the use of the equivalent terms from foreign languages does achieve Augustine’s aim of demonstrating that there is a difference between a word’s extension and its sense, the general claim is unsatisfactory. The proposal that there is absolute reciprocity between ‘*nomen*’ and ‘ὄνομα’, or indeed any words in different languages, is false³³⁶. However, it may simply be that what Augustine intends here is that when ‘*nomen*’ and ‘ὄνομα’ denote the same thing they demonstrate absolute reciprocity, which is a less controversial proposal. In this context it is difficult to determine which position Augustine is suggesting, for the purpose of his discussion is to demonstrate that there is a

difference between words with equivalent extensions and those with an equivalence in sense also. The proposal concerning reciprocity between words in different languages is subordinate to this purpose and is introduced in terms too general to accurately determine his specific intention with regards to ‘*nomen*’ and ‘ὄνομα’. The fact that Augustine does not state that these terms are reciprocal *specifically* when they denote the same thing would appear to suggest that he does intend the general claim that the two terms do in fact demonstrate complete reciprocity.

5.7. Classification of Signs.

0456 This final classification of signs can therefore be seen to fall into the following:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Signs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (i) signify themselves; - (ii) signify each other; - (iii) have same extension; - (iv) have same sense. |
|-------|--|

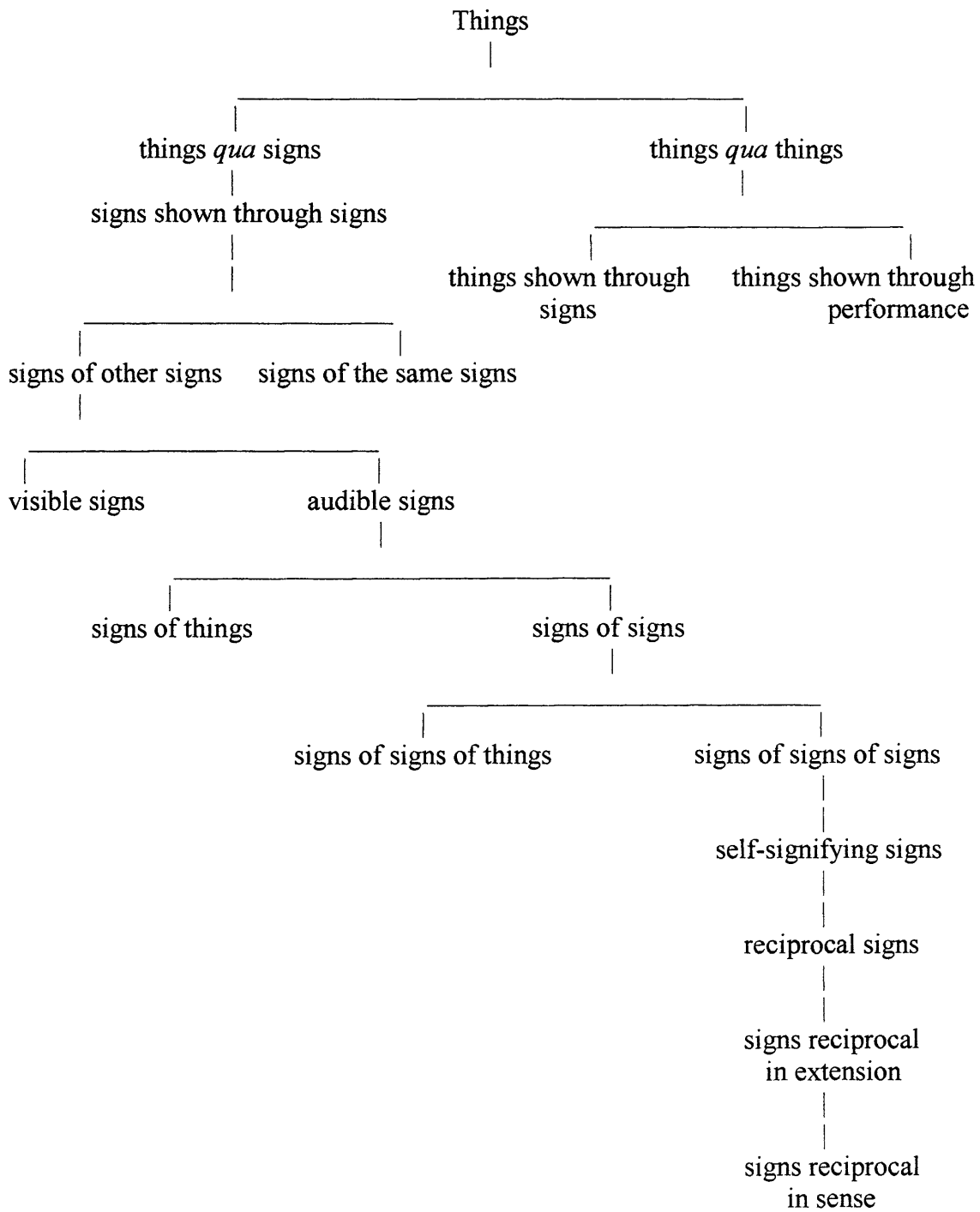
Aug. peruentum est ergo ad ea signa, quae se ipsa significant et aliud ab alio inuicem significetur et quicquid ab uno hoc et ab alio et nihil praeter sonum inter se differant; nam hoc quartum modo inuenimus; tria enim superiora et de nomine ac uerbo intelleguntur.

(18)

0457 The complete classification of the various modes of signification can now be represented.

³³⁶ Both terms are seen to differ in an obvious way in that the term ‘*nomen*’ can refer to the clan name in contrast to the *praenomen* and *cognomen*, while ‘ὄνομα’ cannot.

(D22)



6. Classification (2.1): Things Shown by Signs.

0458 The second classification which Augustine considers involves the second class of communicables, namely, things (*v. sup.* 0199-0200). The first class, that is, signs, was considered above (§ 5). This second class of communicables can be divided into two subsections, depending on the mode of communication. Things are either shown through performance or through signs (DM 7) and it is the second mode of communication which will now be considered.

Aug. age iam ergo illam partem consideremus, cum signis non alia signa significantur, sed ea, quae significabilia nominamus.
(22)

0459 This class involves items which can be defined as ‘signifiable’ and, after the semantic clarifications of § 5, Augustine can now begin to more fully develop his thesis on the relation between language and reality and the role of the human mind as mediator in this relationship.

6.1. Ambiguity.

0460 Augustine introduces the class of things shown by signs as related to the problem of how the usage of a word is determined. This is initially introduced by means of the apparently simple identity statement of ‘*homo homo est*’³³⁷.

Aug. ...et primum dic mihi, utrum homo homo sit.
(22)

The question is confused by its very simplicity, as there is no contextualising of what is being discussed, and how it is being discussed.

Ad. nunc uero an ludas nescio.

Aug. quid ita?

Ad. quia quaerendum ex me censes, utrum homo aliud sit quam homo.

(22)

0461 On closer consideration, and in light of Augustine's analysis that all words are names (v. *sup.* § 5.6.2), one can, potentially, analyse the statement "*homo est homo*" in a number of different ways³³⁸.

- (a.1) [*homo*] *est* [*homo*]
"the sound 'person' is the sound 'person'"
- (a.2) [*homo*] *est* [<*homo*>]
"the sound 'person' is a person"
- (a.3) [*homo*] *est* [/*homo*/]
"the sound 'person' is the meaningful utterance 'person'"
- (b.1) [<*homo*>] *est* [<*homo*>]
"a person is a person"
- (b.2) [<*homo*>] *est* [/*homo*/]
"a person is the meaningful utterance 'person'"
- (b.3) [<*homo*>] *est* [*homo*]
"a person is the sound 'person'"
- (c.1) [/*homo*/] *est* [/*homo*/]
"The meaningful utterance 'person' is the meaningful utterance 'person'"
- (c.2) [/*homo*/] *est* [*homo*]
"The meaningful utterance 'person' is the sound 'person'"
- (c.3) [/*homo*/] *est* [<*homo*>]
"The meaningful utterance 'person' is a person"

0462 Clearly, (a.1), (b.1), and (c.1) are identity statements which are self-evidently true, while the other examples involve, as the symbols employed make apparent, a

³³⁷ The example is cited in Latin to avoid the difficulties introduced by the inclusion or omission of the definite or indefinite article in English.

³³⁸ In the following analysis the following symbols will be employed: (i) [*homo*] to represent the four-letter word which can be used to mention itself as material sign, that is, *qua uerbum*; (ii) [<*homo*>] to represent the word as used to point to something beyond itself, that is, *qua dictio*; (iii) [/*homo*/] to

confusion over how the words are being used (that is, how they signify) and are false.

The statement '*homo est homo*' is an apparently simple identity statement such that $a = a$. However, taken with the clarifications concerning different kinds of use (§ 5.6.2 - § 5.6.2.5), it is clear that there is a more complex breakdown of the statement than simply ' $a = a$ '.

(a.1) $a = a$	(b.1) $a' = a'$	(c.1) $a'' = a''$
(a.2) $a = a'$	(b.2) $a' = a''$	(c.2) $a'' = a$
(a.3) $a = a''$	(b.3) $a' = a$	(c.3) $a'' = a'$

This is, in fact, equivalent to the following.

(a.1) $a = a$	(b.1) $b = b$	(c.1) $c = c$
(a.2) $a = b$	(b.2) $b = c$	(c.2) $c = a$
(a.3) $a = c$	(b.3) $b = a$	(c.3) $c = b$

In this analysis the only statements which can truly be described as identity statements are ' $a = a$ ', ' $b = b$ ', and ' $c = c$ '.

6.1.1. Sound and Signification.

0463 The introduction of the ambiguity evident in such statements as '*homo est homo*' is to be classified under the Stoic species of ambiguity³³⁹ which involves homonymy³⁴⁰ in compounds.

represent the word as used to mention itself as a meaningful utterance, that is, *qua nomen*. For the introduction of this terminology cf. 0448.

³³⁹ The following discussion of the Stoic approach to ambiguity of homonymy in compounds and Augustine's reception of this is much indebted to Atherton: 1993, 273-328.

³⁴⁰ Ambiguity, and homonymy in particular, was a standard topic for rhetoric. Rhetorical approaches were practically motivated (cf. Cicero, *inv.* 2.116-117) and the species of Homonymy in Compounds appears not to have been employed in rhetorical analyses (cf. *ad Her.* 2.16), due no doubt to the rather philosophical nature of its concerns. This fact may go some way to explaining the fact that Homonymy in Compounds was, in some circles (Galen takes this approach, *soph.* 15.3-6), treated as a version of Aristotle's Amphiboly (Atherton, 1993, 277) where the ambiguity arises from terms which may be ambiguous in terms of their grammatical function in a given context (cf. Quintilian, *inst.* 7.9.6, where ambiguity '*in coniunctis*' is more akin to Amphiboly than Homonymy in Compounds). This said, the author of the *ad Herennium* (2.16) attacked the use of dialectical texts on ambiguity for the teaching of rhetoric, due to the impracticality of the dialectical approach for rhetorical usage. This may suggest a possible source for Augustine, for although the rhetorical approach would only employ those species of ambiguity applicable to the ends sought through rhetoric, it appears that the student would be

...τῶν λεγομένων ἀμφιβολιῶν... τρίτον δὲ παρὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς
 συνθέτοις ὁμωνυμίαν³⁴¹, οἷον "ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν". ἀμφίβολος γὰρ
 ὁ λόγος εἴτε τὴν οὐσίαν εἴτε τὴν πῶσιν εἶναι σημαίνει.
 (Galen, *soph.* 4)³⁴²

This species of ambiguity, as Atherton stresses (1993, 273), is partner to, and should be studied together with, that of homonymy in simples.

...τῶν λεγομένων ἀμφιβολιῶν... δευτέρα δὲ παρὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς
 ἀπλοῖς ὁμωνυμίαν, οἷον "ἄνδρεῖος", ἥ γὰρ χιτῶν ἢ ἄνθρωπος..
 (Galen, *soph.* 4)

0464 The distinction, between these different types of homonymous ambiguity, as Atherton states, "...rests on the assumption that only some (occurrences of) single terms characterised by homonymy in isolation ('in simples') are so characterised in particular contexts. Certain linguistic environments are taken to disambiguate terms which out of context are homonymous, and which are all classed as isolated homonyms under Homonymy in Simples; under Homonymy in Compounds, by contrast, are ranged only single terms not thus disambiguated" (Atherton, 1993, 273).

0465 Augustine touched upon Homonymy in Simples (*v. sup.* § 5.6) with the introduction of the thesis that all words are names. All words are independently, and non-autonomously, significant. This was demonstrated through the semantic, autonomous, use of the word (*suppositio semantica*), *qua* meaningful utterance, to show that each word can, through its use to name itself as a meaningful utterance, be shown to have its own meaning separate from any context within which one may find it used. Therefore, every word can be seen to function as a *dictio* with its own independent meaning. However, in addition to demonstrating that every word has an independent meaning, by naming this meaning, the use in *suppositio semantica* also

introduced to ambiguity through philosophically sophisticated classifications (such as the Stoic system).

³⁴¹ "ὁμωνυμία δὲ ἐστίν, ὣν φωνὴ μὲν καὶ ὄνομα τὸ αὐτό, ἕτερον δὲ τὸ σημανόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς φωνῆς" Theon, *prog.* 25-27.

³⁴² Cf. also Philoponus, in *APo.* 154.26-29 (Atherton, 1993, 287).

introduces a level of possible ambiguity, for this also demonstrates the use of a word to name itself as meaningful utterance (*nomen*)³⁴³. In addition, Augustine also noted the material autonymous use in *suppositio materialis* where the further level of ambiguity is introduced in that a word may be used to name itself as material sign (*uerbum*).

0466 Augustine, therefore, has forwarded three possible types of ambiguity for Homonymy in Simples in that any individual word may be used as *dictio* (*suppositio formalis*), as *nomen* (*suppositio semantica*), or as *uerbum* (*suppositio materialis*).

0467 As noted by Atherton (v. *sup.* 0464) only some occurrences of words which are homonymously ambiguous in isolation are also ambiguous, homonymously, in compounds. The following thesis constitutes the basis of Augustine's argument in § 5.6.

1. All words are names; in that they name themselves as meaningful items.

This in turn supports and demonstrates the following thesis.

2. All words are non-autonomously significant; in that they signify some extra-linguistic 'object'.

Taken together these two theses lend support and justification to the statement forwarded by Chrysippus (Aulus Gellius 1.12.1):

3. All words are ambiguous.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ It is not insignificant that a possible ambiguity in the quotation from Galen (*soph.* 4), cited above (0463), necessitates that one assume that "...the infinitive εἶναι corresponding to the finite verb ἔστιν in the illustration itself is used with τὴν οὐσίαν and with τὴν πτωσιν alike; so... the meaning of the finite verb must be constant, and that ἄνθρωπος alone is homonymous" (Atherton: 1993, 278).

Augustine quite clearly dismisses this possible ambiguity in his example through the repetition of the ambiguous item under consideration ('*homo*'). In so doing Augustine would appear to support the thesis that "Homonymy *in* compounds is just that, not homonymy *of* compounds" (Atherton, 1993, 278). Augustine is concerned with the ambiguous use of the term '*homo*' in the sentence and this is highlighted by the fact that the two occurrences of the term may be used differently so as to elicit a false conclusion: for example, that a person [*<homo>*] is a four-letter word [*homo*].

³⁴⁴ Cf. Atherton: 1993, 273 ff.

0468 The proposal that all words are ambiguous depends on the fact that any term may signify something beyond itself (some extra-linguistic object), in *suppositio formalis*, or may signify itself as a meaningful utterance, in *suppositio semantica*. The use in *suppositio materialis* is not something which is focused on by Augustine as of central concern to this discussion. This would appear to be due to the fact that such items are semantically barren and are, therefore, of little concern to Augustine's consideration of the relationship between linguistic terms, the reality which they signify, and the role of human understanding in this relationship³⁴⁵. Also, as will be considered below (§ 6), Augustine is concerned with the necessity of interpretation in the linguistic act and the barriers this necessity imposes for any epistemological clarity. The type of interpretation which Augustine is concerned with is semantic, in that he is interested in the necessity of interpretation to evaluate how someone is signifying or what they are meaning when using a term or proposition, and therefore the semantically barren use in *suppositio materialis*, although a mode of ambiguity, is beside the point. The use in *suppositio materialis* is generally dismissed, by Augustine in the DM, by simply demonstrating the type of autonymy involved by saying 'the sound *x*' or 'the *n*-letter word *x*'. It is of note, however, that as Augustine is seen to briefly dispose of the use in *materialis* when he is focused on making specifically semantic distinctions, so too, when he moves on to properly discuss the 'homo' sophism, where the focus is on clarifying the use to which a word is put, will Augustine drop the distinction in *semantica* so as to more clearly specify the confusion over mentioning a word (*materialis* or *semantica*) or using it (*formalis*)³⁴⁶.

³⁴⁵ Items which are semantically pregnant but are unknown to individuals other than as sounds (such as the term 'sarabara') will be discussed in due course (v. *inf.* § 8.1.2). With regard to such terms Augustine will return to words in *suppositio materialis* but, crucially, his concern will be with the fact that some individual does not recognise the term as a *dictio* because he is unaware of the signification (v. *inf.* § 8.1.2).

³⁴⁶ v. *inf.* § 6.

0469 In addition to the DM, Augustine considered ambiguous terms in DD 8-10³⁴⁷ and, although his discussion in that text is less sophisticated, in its approach to ambiguity, than that in the DM, it will be useful to briefly consider the relevant passages in the DD.

0470 Obscurity ('*obscuritas*') and ambiguity ('*ambiguitas*') are of concern to the dialectician because they may cause a hindrance to the discernment of truth.

itaque nunc propter ueritatem diiudicandam, quod dialectica profitetur, ex hac uerborum ui... quae impedimenta nascantur, uideamus. impedit enim auditorem ad ueritatem uidendam in uerbis aut obscuritas aut ambiguitas.
(*dial.* 7.66-8.2)

Of particular interest in the introduction of the theme of ambiguity³⁴⁸ is that the business of dialectic is the discernment of truth (*ueritatem diiudicandam quod dialectica profitetur*), and that this truth is discerned in words (*ad ueritatem uidendam in uerbis*), and that truth in words is related to the force, or meaning, of these words (*ex hac uerborum ui*). In this Augustine follows the Stoic proposal that truth is concerned with the significations of words (cf. Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 8.11-12).

0471 The hindrance which arises from ambiguity depends upon the force, or meaning (*uerborum ui*), of the words in question and the hearer is impeded in discerning the truth (*ad ueritatem uidendam*) in the words, which is to say, the hearer does not grasp the signification of the term, or terms, being spoken. The truth of speech depends upon the signification, which is an intelligible and essentially mental item (v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.2.5.6) which the hearer either sees (inwardly) or does not. The metaphor of 'sight' is central to Augustine's approach to epistemology and the grasping of truth entails a sort of clarity of inner vision³⁴⁹. In ambiguous language this

³⁴⁷ For recent discussions of ambiguity in the DD cf. Ruef: 1981; Baratin and Desbordes: 1982; Amsler: 1989; Atherton: 1993, 289-94.

³⁴⁸ The treatment of obscurity, and other types of linguistic ambiguities, is briefly considered in the DM (42-44) and will be discussed in due course (§ 10).

³⁴⁹ The role of inner sight will be considered at length below (§ 9).

discernment of truth is confused, as it were, due to there being more than one possible interpretation of the term, or proposition, spoken. The epistemological difficulties caused by obscurity and ambiguity, the differences between them and their similarities, and the relation of understanding, for Augustine (and Plato), to the metaphor of sight are all demonstrated in a wonderful passage.

inter ambiguum et obscurum hoc interest, quod in ambiguo plura se ostendunt, quorum quid potius accipiendum sit ignoratur, in obscuro autem nihil aut parum quod attendatur apparet. sed ubi parum est quod apparet, obscurum est ambiguo simile: ueluti si quis ingrediens iter excipiat aliquo biuio uel triuio uel etiam ut ita dicam multiuio loco, ibique densitate nebulae nihil uiarum quod est eluceat. ergo a pergendo prius obscuritate terretur; at ubi aliquantum rarescere nebulae coeperint, uidetur aliquid, quod utrum uia sit an terrae proprius et nitidior color incertum est. hoc est obscurum ambiguo simile. dilucescente autem caelo quantum oculis satis sit iam omnium uiarum deductio clara est, sed qua sit pergendum non obscuritate sed ambiguitate dubitatur.

(dial. 8.2-17)

0472 Ambiguous terms are compared to the example of the crossroads where there are many possible paths, or interpretations, which lead from the term but which are obscure due to a lack of clarity on account of there being a lack of contextualisation. The individual word requires further information so as to be understood.

fac enim eos qui aderant et satis sensu accepisse uocem magistri et illum id uerbum enuntiasse quod esset omnibus notum, ut puta fac eum dixisse magnus et deinde siluisse. attende, quae incerta hoc audito nomine patiantur. quid si enim dicturus est quae pars orationis? quid si de metris quaesiturus qui sit pes? quid si de historia rogaturus ut puta magnus Pompeius quot bella gesserit? quid si commendandorum carminum gratia dicturus est magnus et paene solus poeta Vergilius? quid si obiurgaturus negligentiam discipulorum in haec deinde uerba prorumpet magnus uos erga studia torpor inuasit? uidesne remota nebula obscuritatis illud quod supra dictum est quasi eminusse multiuium? nam hoc unum quod dictum est magnus et nomen est et pes chorius est et Pompeius est et Vergilius et negligentiae torpor et si qua alia uel innumerabilia non commemorata sunt, quae tamen per hanc enuntiationem uerbi possunt intellegi.

(dial. 8.56-74)

0473 In this passage Augustine appears to refer to Homonymy in Simples and proceeds to connect to this type of ambiguity the fact that all words are ambiguous (cf. Aulus Gellius 11.12.2, on Chrysippus).

*itaque rectissime a dialecticis*³⁵⁰ *dictum est ambiguum esse omne uerbum.*
(*dial.* 9.1-2)³⁵¹

The additional point is made that it is isolated words that are all ambiguous, while unambiguous combinations of words are used to disambiguate, or to render unambiguous, terms which are singly ambiguous.

quod enim dictum est omne uerbum esse ambiguum de uerbis singulis dictum est. explicantur autem ambigua disputando et nemo utique uerbis singulis disputat. nemo igitur ambigua uerba uerbis ambiguis explicabit. et tamen cum omne uerbum ambiguum sit, nemo uerborum ambiguitatem nisi uerbis sed iam coniunctis quae ambigua non erunt explicabit... cum dico ambiguum esse omne uerbum, non dico sententiam, non disputationem, quamuis uerbis ista texantur. omne igitur ambiguum uerbum non ambigua disputatione explicabitur.

(*dial.* 9.13-25)

0474 Rather than progress to Homonymy in Compounds Augustine proceeds to discuss different types of ambiguity by means of the Aristotelian terms ‘*uniuoca*’ (συνώνυμα) and ‘*aequi-uoca*’ (ἑμῶνυμα)³⁵². The treatment of the semantics in this discussion (DD 8-9) is rather unclear³⁵³ and seems to involve a confusing of Aristotelian metaphysics and Stoic semantics. Augustine begins by discussing ambiguity as semantically grounded (DD 8), and then proceeds, in his introduction of univocals and equivocals (DD 9), to change focus and to consider items which bear names³⁵⁴ and yet he does so as though they were all, in fact, words. Augustine, also,

³⁵⁰ The dialecticians are here the Stoics.

³⁵¹ Augustine was certainly aware of the topic of ambiguity from Cicero’s *Hortensius* and had enough familiarity with it to be aware of the misrepresentation of the Stoic position: “...*apud Ciceronem calumniatur Hortensius hoc modo ‘ambigua se aiunt audere explicare dilucide. idem omne uerbum ambiguum esse dicunt. quomodo igitur ambigua ambiguis explicabunt? nam hoc est in tenebras extinctum lumen inferre’*” (*dial.* 9.2-7).

³⁵² Aristotle, *Cat.* 1a.

³⁵³ This brief consideration draws on a fuller discussion of these issues by Atherton: 1993, 289-94.

³⁵⁴ “*diximus enim aequiuoca esse, quae non ut uno nomine ita etiam una definitione possunt teneri*” (*dial.* 10.30-32).

never focuses clearly on the role of autonymy in the dictum that all words are ambiguous. This fact may stem, as Atherton suggests (1993, 293), from Augustine's confusing the dictum with a statement of universal lexical ambiguity, where the confusion, in fact, arises not on account of autonymy but rather from the fact that all words have more than one meaning³⁵⁵. This may suggest a possible reason as to why Augustine did not go on to discuss Homonymy in Compound, for if he confused Chrysippus' dictum with universal lexical ambiguity then the discussion of compounds would have appeared superfluous as it appeared to simply restate the same point made by the discussion of simples.

0475 Augustine's consideration of ambiguity in the DM is a development on from that in the DD and shows a surer grasp on the issues and on the import of the Chrysippean statement that all words are ambiguous.

0476 Augustine proceeds to discuss the ambiguity involved in the '*homo est homo*' example, however, it is significant that he does so by apparently contrasting the linguistic uses in *suppositio formalis* and in *suppositio materialis* and entirely drops the autonymous use in *suppositio semantica* which has been developed at length in the preceding discussion with Adeodatus. This seems a rather peculiar move on the part of Augustine and may be due to his discomfort "... with the notion of reflexive signification, and tried to replace it with his own, parallel, distinction" (Atherton, 1993, 296). Perhaps a further explanation may be that Augustine felt the import of reflexive signification (use in *suppositio semantica*) to rest in its explanatory power in demonstrating the independent meaningfulness of all words, even conjunctions and prepositions, and felt that the simpler distinction in *formalis* and *materialis* sufficient to clarify the ambiguity evident in such cases as the '*homo*' example. This does not

³⁵⁵ Augustine's choice of '*magnus*' (DM 8), and his analysis of it, may tend to suggest this.

necessarily imply that Augustine did not grasp the significance of Homonymy in Compounds and the role of autonymy in respect of reflexive signification, but rather, as can be seen in DD (8-10), that he is concerned to use them to his own ends and to apply them as a means of clarification in the contexts where they best fit his intentions. The autonymous use of words, whether in *materialis* or in *semantica*, has, nevertheless, been clarified and is explicitly applied so as to provide a means of using words to talk about words and is used in the case of the ambiguity presented in the ‘*homo*’ example, and in the ‘lion’ sophism which follows on from it (v. *inf.* § 6.1.3).

0477 In the discussion of ‘*homo*’ there is a distinction between sound and signification, or between a word and what it is used to signify³⁵⁶. The word *qua* word consists of letters joined into syllables and syllables joined to form words, while that which is signified is a non-linguistic object³⁵⁷.

Aug. ita credo te illudi arbitraris, si etiam quaererem, utrum prima huius nominis syllaba aliud sit quam ho et aliud secunda quam mo.

Ad. ita omnino.

Aug. at istae duae syllabae coniunctae homo est; an negabis?

Ad. quis neget?

Aug. quaero ergo, num tu duae istae syllabae coniunctae sis.

Ad. nullo modo, sed uideo, quo tendas.

(22)

0478 The sophism introduced in this passage can be analysed as follows.

- S1
1. [A] man (*homo*) is [a] man (*homo*)³⁵⁸
 2. The two syllables [‘ho-’ and ‘-mo’] when joined are man
 3. *x* is a man
 4. Therefore, *x* is those two syllables [‘ho-’ and ‘-mo’].

³⁵⁶For discussions on the similarity with Saussure cf. Kelly: 1975; Mandouze: 1975, 790ff.

³⁵⁷As discussed above (0468), Augustine is less concerned with the *materialis/semantica* distinction here and, perhaps for the sake of simplicity, prefers to consider the ambiguity in the dual modes of sound and signification. To this extent, Augustine is basically considering the sophism from the use-mention perspective and, for the sake of simplicity, the use-mention terminology will be used to discuss Augustine’s following argument.

³⁵⁸This proposition is necessary for the argument and was introduced a few lines prior to the passage quoted.

When words are presented in a manner in which there may be confusion over whether they are used or mentioned, there is a need for clarity or for contextualisation. In such cases where it is unclear to the listener, one must not make rash assumptions as to how a word is being employed in a sentence, but should rather ensure clarification before any judgement is passed. In the example under discussion, ‘*homo*’ may be interpreted as ‘*homo*’ *qua* thing (use) or as ‘*homo*’ *qua* sound (mention). Adeodatus therefore demands to know whether the question is put *de uerbo* or *de re*.

Aug. dicito ergo, ne me contumeliosum putes.

Ad. concludi existimas, quod homo non sim.

Aug. quid? tu non idem existimas, qui omnia superiora, ex quibus hoc confectum est, uera esse concedis?

Ad. non tibi ego dicam, quid existimem, nisi prius abs te audiero, cum quaereres, utrum homo homo sit, de duabus istis syllabis an de re ipsa quam significant, me interrogaueris.

(22)

0479 The issue, therefore, is concerned with *how* one is to understand the word. The use of the term is ambiguous (*ambigua*) and one must determine in what sense³⁵⁹ the term is being used.

Aug. tu potius responde, ex qua parte acceperis interrogationem meam; nam si est ambigua, prius hoc cauere debuisti neque mihi respondere, antequam certus fieres, quonam modo rogauerim.

(22)

The approach to avoiding such a sophism such that one does not respond until the context and specific use of an ambiguous term are clarified would appear to be that advocated by the Stoics (cf. Simplicius, *in Cat.* 24.13-20)³⁶⁰.

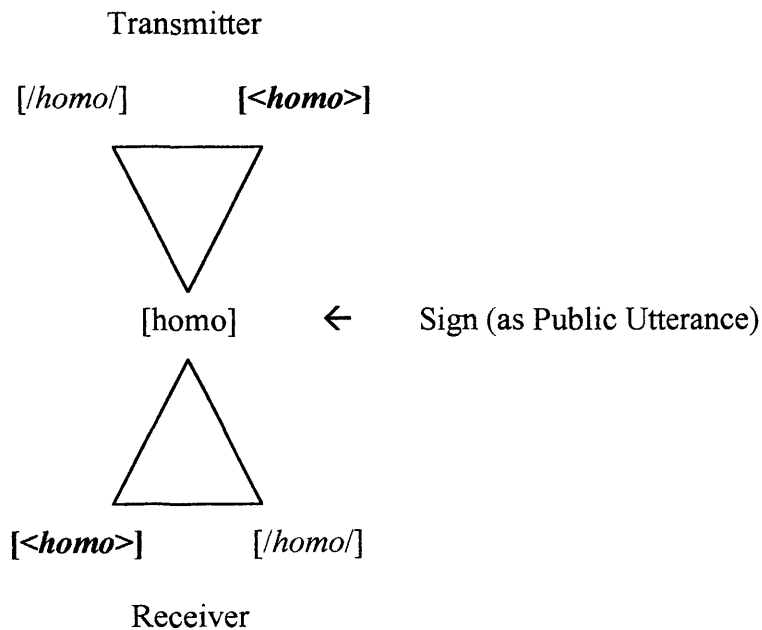
0480 The picture presented here is one which may be compared with the crossroads image in DD 8.7-11. The sign receiver has two (or possibly more) choices and is

³⁵⁹The metaphor ‘*ex parte*’ is not particularly helpful in clarifying exactly what Augustine means. The interpretation here depends on the general thrust of the discussion over the preceding passages of the DM, in that Augustine is concerned that a term may be interpreted in different ways due to the fact that any term may be used in different senses. A single term may be used in a variety of ways by a speaker and likewise may be interpreted, or understood, in a variety of ways by a listener.

³⁶⁰Atherton: 1993, 278.

prevented from making a certain decision due to the lack of contextual clarity. The sign transmitter has two (or more) choices about how to use the sign. The process passes from transmitter choice, via verbal utterance, through to receiver interpretation. The following diagram, using ‘*homo*’ as an example, represents a successful piece of information transfer, with the transmitter’s chosen route in bold and the correct receiver’s interpretation in bold. The upper terms are the possible transmitter choices, the central term is the actual (ambiguous) utterance, and the lower terms are the possible receiver interpretations.

(D23)



0481 Adeodatus raises the objection that he may simply take the word ‘*homo*’ in

both ways and, therefore, would not be misled by the ambiguity.

Ad. quid enim me impediret haec ambiguitas, cum ego ad utrumque responderim? homo enim prorsus homo est; nam et istae duae syllabae nihil aliud sunt quam istae duae syllabae, et id, quod significant, nihil aliud est quam id quod est.

(22)

However, this objection raises the issue as to when, and with regards to what words, is this procedure to be applied. This question, also, raises the wider issue as to how one is to determine the use of words in general.

Aug. scite hoc quidem, sed cur hoc solum, quod dictum est homo, non etiam cetera, quae locuti sumus, ad utrumque accepisti?

Ad. unde enim conuincor, quod et cetera non sic acceperim?

(22)

Indeed, if all words were understood as being mentioned, the sentence in which they occurred would be meaningless.

Aug. ut alia omittam, eam ipsam primam rogationem meam, si totam ex ea parte accepisses, qua syllabae sonant, nihil mihi respondisses; possem tibi enim uideri etiam nihil interrogasse.

(22)

0482 The issue is restated by Augustine: how is one to determine whether a term is being used in accordance to itself as sign (*secundum ipsa signa*) or in accordance with that which it signifies (*secundum ea quae his significantur*)?

Aug. ...nunc uero cum tria uerba sonuerim, quorum unum in medio repetiui dicens, utrum homo homo sit primum et ultimum uerbum non secundum ipsa signa, sed secundum ea, quae his significantur, te accepisse uel hoc solo manifestum est, quod statim certus ac fidens rogationi respondendum putasti.

Ad. uerum dicis.

Aug. cur ergo id tantum, quod in medio positum est, et secundum id, quod sonat, et secundum id, quod significat, te accipere libuit?

(22)

0483 In response to this Adeodatus introduces the important point that it is the natural tendency to understand a word with regards to what it signifies.

Ad. ecce iam totum ex ea tantum parte, qua significatur, accipio; assentior enim tibi sermocinari nos omnino non posse, nisi auditis uerbis ad ea feratur animus, quorum ista sunt signa.

(22)

6.1.2. Restated: Sound and Signification.

0484 When discussing syllables with no independent meaning beyond the fact that they are letters connected to form a syllable, or sound unit, therefore, there is no confusion over the fact that one should understand them simply as syllables.

Aug. illud ergo, quod primo quaesieram, quia iam dedisti, non quaeram. uide igitur diligentius, utrum syllaba ho nihil aliud sit quam ho et utrum mo nihil aliud sit quam mo.
Ad. hic prorsus nihil aliud uideo.
 (23)

However, whenever these syllables are joined to form a word there is an immediate movement from sound unit to significant item. This is seen in the example where one considers whether ‘ho’ and ‘mo’ make ‘homo’.

Aug. uide etiam, num istis duabus iunctis homo fiat.
 (23)

0485 This is due to a priority whereby one focuses on what is signified by a word. Due to this, there is a need for caution in considering the transition from ‘meaningless’ syllables to ‘meaningful’ words.

Ad. nequaquam hoc concesserim; placuit enim et recte placuit signo dato id, quod significatur, adtendere et ex eius consideratione uel dare uel negare quod dicitur. illae autem separatim enuntiatae syllabae, quia sine ulla significatione sonuerunt, hoc eas esse quod sonuerunt concessum est.
 (23)

Although Adeodatus has made an important distinction here, he has gone too far the other way and is suggesting that one should only focus upon what is signified by a word, that is, the extra-linguistic object.

Aug. placet igitur firmumque animo tenes non respondendum esse interrogationibus, nisi ex his rebus, quae uerbis significantur.
Ad. non intellego, cur displiceat, si modo uerba sint.
 (23)

6.1.3. The Lion.

0486 The second sophism which Augustine introduces to clarify the philosophical, and semantic, issues at play in the homonymous class of ambiguity and the approach needed to avoid such fallacies is a variant of the Stoic³⁶¹ ‘wagon’ fallacy.

εἴ τι λαλεῖς, τοῦτο διὰ τοῦ στόματός σου διέρχεται· ἄμαξαν δὲ λαλεῖς· ἄμαξα ἄρα διὰ τοῦ στόματός σου διέρχεται.

(Diogenes Laertius 7.187)

A variant was also used by Clement, in which he also provides a solution³⁶².

ἡ πτώσις δὲ ἀσώματος εἶναι ὁμολογεῖται· διὸ καὶ τὸ σόφισμα ἐκεῖνο οὕτως λύεται· "ὃ λέγεις, διέρχεταιί σου διὰ τοῦ στόματος", ὅπερ ἀληθές, "οἰκίαν δὲ λέγεις, οἰκία ἄρα διὰ τοῦ στόματός σου διέρχεται", ὅπερ ψεῦδος· οὐδὲ γὰρ τὴν οἰκίαν λέγομεν σῶμα οὔσαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν πτώσιν ἀσώματον οὔσαν, ἧς οἰκία τυγχάνει.

(Clement, *strom.* 8.9.26.5)

0487 Augustine presents the rather more colourful version whereby what comes out of the speaker’s mouth is a lion.

Aug. uellem scire, quomodo illi resisteres, de quo iocantes solemus audire, quod ex eius ore, cum quo disputabat, leonem processisse concluderit. cum enim quaesisset, utrum ea, quae loqueremur nostro ore procederent, atque ille non potuisset negare, quod facile fuit, egit cum homine, ut in loquendo leonem nominaret. hoc ubi factum est, ridicule insultare coepit et premere, ut, quoniam quicquid loquimur ore nostro exire confessus erat et leonem se locutum esse nequibat abnuere, homo non malus tam immanem bestiam uomuisse uideretur.

(23)

This sophism may be analysed as follows.

³⁶¹This fallacy occurs in a passage listing sophisms used by Chrysippus.

³⁶²Clement’s account is rather unclear and involves at least one serious error: namely, that the πτώσις which comes out of one’s mouth is incorporeal. The point, surely, of the solution is that there is a distinction between the physical sound of the word, or case, which comes out of one’s mouth and the thing which the word signifies. This point is well made by Atherton (1993, 285-6), who notes that the clue to the solution is within the example in Diogenes Laertius (7.187) where the verb of speaking is ‘λαλεῖς’. This verb, unlike ‘λέγεις’ used in Clement, is “...often applied to the emission of any kind of vocal sound...[this] choice...may well have been intended to point the way to its correct solution, by emphasising the uttered term’s phonetic - and thus corporeal - aspect” (Atherton, 1993, 286). The

the vocabulary, the physical absurdity of the conclusion (*uomuisse*), while also emphasising the extra-linguistic nature of the object, namely, the lion. The language of the argument can be seen to highlight the three factors at play in the fallacy: the corporeal vocal sound; the incorporeal signification, which the vocal sound bears; and the actual object which is referred to. The central stage, the signification, is the turning point in the fallacy for it is the transition between what is said (the word) and what it is said about (the object).

0489 Adeodatus clarifies the ambiguity with the analysis that it is the sign which comes out of one's mouth, not the thing signified.

Ad. minime uero erat arduum scurrae huic resistere; non enim concederem ore nostro exire quaecumque loquimur. nam quae loquimur, ea significamus, non autem res, quae significatur, sed signum, quo significatur, loquentis ore procedit, nisi cum ipsa signa significantur, quod genus paulo ante tractauimus.

Aug. bene tu quidem hoc modo aduersus illum esses paratus.

(23-24)

0490 The 'lion' fallacy has allowed Augustine to temper Adeodatus' inclination (v. *sup.* 0485) to focus only upon what is signified by terms, that is the extra-linguistic object. The provision is that one must be aware of the linguistic element in speech, and not simply the referring mode of language for otherwise one will be open to such fallacies as that demonstrated by the 'lion'.

the incorporeal meaning. Indeed, for the fallacy to work it must be the meaningful utterance which comes out of the mouth" (1987). The fact that the fallacy does not really work without understanding the semantic autonomous aspect of the word use, and that Augustine is seen in his analysis of names and words to appreciate this distinction, adds weight to the fact that this is the sense in which the fallacy is understood, although Augustine does not draw the point out.

6.1.4. Rational Law and Linguistic Rule.

0491 To finalise the clarification of the type of linguistic ambiguity under discussion Augustine introduces a third sophism.

Aug. ...uerum tamen mihi quid respondebis, utrum homo nomen sit, requirenti?

Ad. quid, nisi esse nomen?

Aug. quid cum te uideo, num nomen uideo?

Ad. non.

Aug. uisne igitur dicam quod sequitur?

Ad. ne quaeso; nam mihi ipse renuntio me hominem non esse, qui nomen esse responderim, cum homo utrum nomen esset inquireretur. iam enim placuerat ex ea re, quae significaretur, aut assentiri aut negare quod dicitur.

(24)

The line of argumentation in this sophism is as follows.

- S₃
1. Man (*homo*) is a name
 2. *x* is not a name
 3. Therefore, *x* is not a man.

0492 Adeodatus has apparently arrived at this position due to a ‘law of reason’ (*lex rationis*) by which the mind is ‘predisposed’ (*mentibus nostris indita*) to determine the use of a word dependent on the context within which it occurs. Any term, taken individually can be interpreted either from the sense in which it is a sign or from that in which it signifies.

Aug. at mihi uidetur non te frustra in hanc responsionem decidisse; nam uigilantiam tuam mentibus nostris indita ipsa lex rationis euicit. nam si quaererem, quid esset homo, responderes fortasse animal; si autem quaererem, quae pars orationis esset homo, nullo modo posses recte respondere nisi nomen. quam ob rem, cum homo et nomen et animal esse inueniatur, illud dicitur ex ea parte, qua signum est, hoc qua significatur.

(24)

0493 It is through contextual disambiguation that the use, to which any term is applied, can be determined. The context in which the term is used with application to the extra-linguistic item is more readily (*multo procluius*) grasped, presumably due to

this being the more standard application of the term. In modern terminology it would perhaps be referred to as being the more entrenched.

qui ergo quaerit, utrum homo nomen sit, nihil ei aliud quam esse respondeam; satis enim significat ex ea parte se uelle audire, qua signum est. si autem quaerit, utrum animal sit, multo proclivius adnuam...
(24)

0494 In the situation where there is a lack of clear contextualisation, the linguistic rule (*loquendi regula*) suggested previously (DM 23) is applied. This rule determines that, without contextual clarification, one interprets the use of a term as being applied with reference to what is signified. It should be noted that this example (*‘homo est’*) is equivalent to that introduced by Galen (“ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν” *soph.* 4) and that the implication is that the context does not disambiguate the use of the term *‘homo’* and, therefore, can be interpreted as a member of the class of Homonymy in Compounds.

quoniam si tacens et nomen et animal tantum quid esset homo requireret, placita illa loquendi regula ad id, quod his duabus syllabis significatur, animus curreret neque quicquam responderetur nisi animal, uel etiam tota definitio diceretur, id est animal rationale mortale.
(24)

0495 Accurate communication depends, therefore, on the correct interpretation of the sense in which a speaker is using any particular term.

Ad. prorsus uidetur. sed cum esse nomen concesserimus, quomodo illam conclusionem nimis contumeliosam euitabimus, qua nos homines non esse conuincitur?
Aug. quomodo putas nisi docendo non ex ea parte illatam, qua interroganti assentiebamur? aut si ex ea parte illam se fatetur inferre nullo modo est formidanda. quid enim metuum hominem, id est tres istas syllabas non esse me confiteri?
(24)

The tendency of the mind is to interpret in accord with the rule which is naturally the stronger, and the stronger is to understand a word as referring to what is signified rather than to itself as sign.

Aug. quia non possum non putare ad id conclusionem referri, quod his duabus syllabis significatur, simul atque ista uerba sonuerint, ea scilicet regula, quae

*naturaliter plurimum ualet, ut auditis signis ad res significatas feratur intentio*³⁶⁴.

(24)

0496 It is worth brief consideration that there is a *law* (*lex*) of reason and a *rule* (*regula*) of speech. The priority resides with the law of reason which determines how one interprets any term, and it is only when there is no contextual basis for determining use that the rule is applied. The rule of speech is a model, or example, which is conventional (*placita illa loquendi regula*)³⁶⁵ and is applied, in a sense, based on belief, for there is no sound basis for determining how exactly one should interpret any given term. The law, however, would appear to be more firmly imposed, or imparted upon, the mind (*indita*) and it has priority, presumably, based on the firmer and rationally based grounds for determining the use of a term dependent upon context³⁶⁶.

0497 The three sophisms elucidate a number of connected issues. Firstly (S₃), that there is a law of reason such that the mind turns firstly to context so as to disambiguate linguistic usage and signification. This law determines the priority of sense in which any term should be understood. Secondly (S₁), there is a linguistic rule such that, all things being equal, the mind interprets, immediately (cf. “... *ad id, quod his duabus syllabis significatur, animus curreret*...” DM 24), a sign in relation to that

³⁶⁴The term ‘*intentio*’ is a sort of inner, mental, concentration (for a fuller description cf. O’Daly: 1987, 84-7) and is “...an echo, however dematerialized, of the Stoic concept of *tonos*...” (O’Daly: 1987, 85 n.13). Cf. Pohlenz: 1980, 220.

³⁶⁵It is true that ‘*naturaliter*’ is used with reference to the ‘*regula*’. However, this is used with reference not to the distinction between the law of reason and the rule of language but rather to the different levels of the rule of language, namely, whether one understands the reference as the word or the object signified. Also, the context does not necessitate that the rule is in fact a natural, that is, non-conventional one, but rather that the mind turns to the application which is stronger by nature, which may simply mean that which is more ‘entrenched’. It may also be possible to interpret the use of ‘*naturaliter*’ as depending on the nature of signs, for although the words may be acquired inductively, the rule of language which applies in this context is natural in that it is natural that a sign be interpreted as pointing to something beyond itself (v. *sup.* § 3.2.1).

³⁶⁶As will be discussed below (§ 9) it is apt that these distinctions occur due to the fact that reason is something specifically granted and facilitated by God (hence a law) and that language depends upon rules, or examples, on account of it being inductively learned through the application of reason (so of course language is still due to God) in following the behaviour of others.

which it signifies. This rule also implies, as does the example within which it occurs, that context does not always disambiguate. Also, there is the need to have an awareness of the ambiguous nature of terms and to grasp the different applications of any term so as to avoid fallacies (S2). In this way one will be able to make a decision based on context and to make the correct interpretation due to what is signified (word or object). In contexts where there is no clarification of how a term is applied and in which a fallacy may lead to false conclusions then one must refrain from answering until one is sure of the context or of how the term is being applied (DM 22).

0498 In his treatment of ambiguous terms, Augustine can be seen to be aware of the Stoic arguments and to apply them in ways suited to his own particular concerns.

Although the full import of the Stoic approach to autonymy and homonymous terms in simples and compounds is not always clear from Augustine's approach it can be seen that the Stoic approach to these issues did have a great effect on Augustine's analysis of signs and, as will be seen (*v. inf.* § 8 and § 9), this analysis also has an impact on his approach to the role of language in knowledge acquisition, and indeed in his approach to knowledge acquisition *per se*.

6.1.5. Proprie.

0499 A central concern of the DM is the nature of teaching and Augustine proceeds to essentially redefine, or to narrow the application of, the term '*docere*'³⁶⁷. This does not mean that all other uses are wrong but rather that there is a 'proper' or strict meaning for the term. This approach reveals a concern of Augustine's which can be observed to recur throughout his work, namely the refocusing or narrowly defining of

³⁶⁷I am indebted to Burnyeat (1987, 6) for this point.

commonly used terms. The proper use of a term is only discovered through reason and, as Augustine sees it, with greater understanding of concepts so too do the proper applications of words become more accurately refined. The word '*proprie*'³⁶⁸ is important in this sense in Augustine and is consistently used in the sense of the correct application of words, often when correcting a misapplication or affirming a questionable application.

0500 The use of this term occurs elsewhere in linguistic contexts (cf. for example, Aulus Gellius 2.6.5; 7.11.2; 9.1.8; 16.5.1). However, it is probable that Augustine is using the term as a translation of the Greek term 'κυρίως'³⁶⁹. Ancient discussion on 'proper', or strict, uses and 'improper', or loose, uses were common and Augustine would appear to conform to this tradition.

0501 It is possible that Augustine is using it as a direct rendering of the Stoic application of the term and may be influenced by the Stoic approach to these issues. Augustine can, in fact, be seen (DD 10) to be interested in the Stoic attempt to determine the 'proper', or strict, significations of terms³⁷⁰ through classification such as transference (*translatio*). It must be said that the evidence for any sure attestation of a direct influence on Augustine is unavailable. However, that Augustine is concerned with such issues, and that there was a tradition within which he is placed is without doubt. Augustine may, once again, have become aware of such issues through his training as a rhetor for with regard to "... rhetorical and grammatical/literary critical texts... explicit distinctions between acceptable metaphors and unacceptable

³⁶⁸'*Proprie*' occurs in this sense invariably with *appellare*; *dicere*; *loqui*; *uocari*; *nuncupare*. cf. esp. *ord.* 1.29; *dial.* 10.110; 10.112; *mag.* 9; *doctr. chr.* 1.2; 2.13; 4.35; *conf.* 11.26; *trin.* 1.10; 1.12; 1.18; 2.19; 2.26; 3.19; 4.24; 5.12; 7.6; 7.10; 13.24; 14.3; 14.26; 15.5; 15.17; 15.29; 15.30; 15.31; 15.32; 15.37; 15.38; 15.45; *retr.* 1.4.2; 1.10.3; 1.14.3; etc.

³⁶⁹For a fuller discussion of 'κυρίως' cf. Atherton: 1993, 162-167.

³⁷⁰Cf. Atherton: 1993, 167.

ambiguities would have been found useful for teaching composition or for defending canonical authors from charges of stylistic infelicity” (Atherton: 1993, 166).

6.2. The Priority of Sign, Thing, and Knowledge.

0502 With the lengthy discussion and clarification of the modes of communication, the class of communicables, and that class of linguistic ambiguity which is deemed relevant by Augustine, the focus of the dialogue returns to the relationship of signs to reality, reality to knowledge, and knowledge to signs. In doing so, Augustine is concerned to determine the relative priorities existing between these different items.

0503 In the following analysis Augustine works from the principle that whatever exists on account of another thing, necessarily, has a lower status, existentially, than that on account of which it exists.

Aug. ...quicquid enim propter aliud est, uilius³⁷¹ sit necesse est, quam id propter quod est...

(25)

This principle can be stated as follows.

P₁ If x exists on account of y , then y is of more value than x .³⁷²

0504 The basis for this principle is causal, for clearly x exists because (*propter*) of y , and in this sense there is a clear priority: y is the cause of x , therefore y is existentially prior. However, due to Augustine’s hierarchical world view, there is a sense of value

³⁷¹How exactly one is to understand ‘*uilius*’ in this context is not clear. The most plausible interpretation is that there is present some sense of the Plotinian hypostases (Plot. 5.1) with the sense of dependent existence, taken together with the idea that something higher, or prior, is *carus* and something lower, or worse, is *vilis*; is said, Augustine may also be influenced in this context by the application of such a principle as seen in Aristotle, cf. *APo.* 1.2, *EN* 1.7. The language of *carus/uilis* also introduces the idea of the higher being more beloved and morally superior, which would be best explained by the Christian context and by the Augustinian approach to the highest caused of existence, and that on account of which everything exists, being God and God being the ultimate source of *amor*. The closer to God the dearer (*carius*) something is, the further removed, the worse (*uilius*).

³⁷²King: 1995, 127 n.57.

introduced (*uilius*). The evaluative judgement imposed on the causal principle is rather awkward and makes for a rather difficult argument.

6.2.1. Sign and Thing.

0505 The proposal, based on P₁, is introduced that things signified are of more importance than their signs.

Aug. proinde intellegas uolo res, quae significantur, pluris quam signa esse pendendas.

(25)

The argument is that signs exist because of those things that they signify, and are, therefore, necessarily, of less value than the things signified.

P₁' Signs exist on account of things (signified), therefore things (signified) are of more value than signs.

0506 The basis of this proposal is seen in the *res/signa* distinction in the DDC (v. *sup.* § 3.2.1). Words (*qua* signs) are used solely with the purpose of signifying things and it follows that signs are things which are used so as to signify something.

nemo enim utitur uerbis, nisi aliquid significandi gratia. ex quo intellegitur, quid appellem signa, res eas uidelicet, quae ad significandum aliquid adhibentur.

(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

Signs are things on account of the fact that they are so employed, that is, to signify things and it is in this sense that signs are things. However, although all signs are things, not all things are signs.

quam ob rem omne signum etiam res aliqua est; quod enim nulla res est, omnino nihil est; non autem omnis res etiam signum est.

(*doctr. chr.* 1.2)

The whole basis of the existence of signs is that they signify, and the basis of this signifying is that something is signified. Signs are things, but are members of the class

of things, not *vice versa* (*omne signum... res... non omnis res etiam signum est*). The reason that signs are things is because of the things they signify, their existence is, therefore, on account of these things and so the things signified are existentially prior.

0507 Adeodatus, taking up Augustine's introduction of valuation, proposes that words may be superior to the thing on whose account they exist. This naturally raises the point as to the questionable use of value terms in such a context and even how such terms can reasonably be understood with regards to such disparate items as 'word' and 'object'.

0508 The point is made that when one says 'filth' (*caenum*), this term is superior to the things it signifies. What is offensive is not the sound of the word, the signifier, for with simply one change of letter (*caelum*) one has the word 'heaven', whereas for the things signified by these terms there is a vast difference. It is of note that the language chosen by Adeodatus recalls the fact that terms are meaningful items (*nomen*) and that the mind is taken primarily to the thing signified ('*loquendi regula*' DM 24; 0494) and that this is what causes 'offence' (*offendit audientes*) to those hearing the term ("Ad. cur ergo animum offendit, cum dicitur: "*non es igitur homo*"? ... Aug. quia... auditis signis ad res significatas feratur intentio" DM 24).

Ad. uidetur mihi non temere hic esse assentiendum; nam cum dicimus caenum, longe hoc nomen arbitror rei quam significat antecellere. quod enim nos offendit audientes non ad ipsius uerbi pertinet sonum; caenum enim nomen mutata una littera caelum est. inter illa uero, quae his nominibus significantur, quantum distet uidemus.

(25)

0509 Taken in material terms, that is, comparing the word sound with the actual physical object which is talked about, it is clear that one would rather come into contact with the word '*caenum*' than the object.

Ad. quamobrem nequaquam huic signo tribuerim, quod in re, quam significat, odimus, et propterea hoc illi iure antepono; libentius enim hoc audimus, quam ullo sensu illud attingimus.

(25)

It would, therefore, appear that it is false that all things should be valued more than their signs. This position is considered in the light of the purpose which exists behind the act of name giving.

6.2.1.1. The Purpose of Naming Things.

0510 After the long analysis and classification of linguistic signs, the dialogue can now return to the central question, namely, that of the epistemological issues concerning knowledge acquisition and the relation of language to this.

0511 The analysis of things shown by signs does not follow a pattern similar to that of signs shown by signs. The reason for this is, mainly, that the question concerning the relation of signs to objects was shown to ultimately depend upon the broader issue as to how knowledge is acquired and could, therefore, only be determined through an analysis of performance (v. *sup.* § 4): a subject which must await the discussion of things shown through performance. Thus far, much has been established about the status of linguistic signs, of and in themselves, however, the main conclusions reached, for the purposes of the dialogue, are that words do not appear to show what it is that they refer to (cf. discussion of ostension below, § 7 and § 8) and to do so they must be demonstrated to allow some sort of direct access to their objects. Further, words in themselves are ambiguous and their significations may only be determined in an inductive manner based on an accepted standard for linguistic interpretation (v. *sup.* § 6.1-§ 6.1.4). In addition, it has been determined that words may be rationally disambiguated, in most cases, by means of contextualisation (v. *sup.* § 6.1-§ 6.1.4).

However, in considering the question of things shown through signs the analysis falls between two stools, as it were. This, as mentioned above, is due to the fact that the analysis of words has highlighted the major issues concerning words, fundamentally that there is a need for some level of interpretation in the communication process and, related to this, that there appears to be the need for a mental item between word and object. While in addition there remains to be considered the status of things shown through performance and their position in relation to knowledge acquisition, and the question as to how the facts of performative acquisition can be related to the analysis of words. The consideration of things shown through signs, therefore, introduces the mediating factor of intention and what is the true purpose of language.

0512 The prioritising of words and things once again raises the question as to the purpose behind naming, or applying words, to things.

*Aug. dic ergo mihi, quid arbitraris eos secutos esse, qui huic rei tam foedae
atque aspernabili nomen indiderunt, uel utrum eos probes an improbes?
Ad. ego uero illos nec probare nec improbare audeo nec quid fuerint secuti
scio...*
Aug. potesne saltem scire, quid tu sequaris, cum hoc nomen enuntias?
(25)

This question simply refashions the opening question of the dialogue.

Aug. quid tibi uidemur efficere uelle, cum loquimur?
(1)

Thus far in the dialogue, performance (*efficere*) has been of central concern: that is not to say that intention was entirely absent, but rather that the central focus was on *how* words signify and what problems can be determined in the linguistic process.

Intention (*uelle*) is now re-introduced to the fore and in the final stages of the dialogue an attempt will be made to consider how well the performance meets the intention of speech.

0513 The definition of the purpose of speech is now more fully stated, in accordance with the conclusions arrived at over the length of the dialogue. One utters a name (*nomen enuntias*) with the intention of signifying (*significare uolo*). The act of signifying is with the purpose (*ut*)³⁷³ of teaching or reminding (*doceam uel admoneam*) the person what one thinks he/she should be taught/reminded.

Ad. hoc plane possum; nam significare uolo, ut eum, cum quo loquor, doceam uel admoneam de re illa, quod eum doceri uel admoneri oportere arbitror.

(25)

0514 This restated definition focuses upon a number of elements which have been to some extent been clarified thus far (1): naming (*nomen*); utterance (*enuntias*); and signifying (*significare*). There also remain a number of unresolved issues (2): the question as to the status of teaching or reminding (*doceam uel admoneam*); the related question as to the relation between the sign receiver and the sign transmitter (*eum cum quo loquor*); and the, also related, issue as to the place of the object of knowledge which is to be taught (*de re illa*). The place of intention (*uolo*) remains between these two groups (1) and (2). Group one relate primarily to language, group (2) to the acquisition of knowledge and information transfer, while intentionality depends on its success in the successful bridging of (1) to (2).

6.2.2. Sign, Object, and Knowledge.

0515 Knowledge (*scientia*), which is the result of teaching or reminding, is superior to the sign. However, that does not apply for the relation between objects and signs.

Aug. quid? ipsum docere aut admonere siue doceri aut admoneri, quod uel tu exhibes commode per hoc nomen uel exhibetur tibi, nonne carius quam ipsum nomen habendum est?

³⁷³The closing passages of the DM will essentially hinge on this 'ut', for the question is as to whether the act of signifying does in fact teach or remind, and if so, in what way.

Ad. concedo ipsam scientiam, quae per hoc signum euenit eidem signo esse anteposendam, sed non ideo etiam rem ipsam puto.

(25)

0516 Therefore, it is proposed that although it may be false that all objects are superior to their signs, this does not falsify P₁ (0503). If the purpose of speech is to teach or remind someone of something, this is equivalent to transferring, or reminding another of, information. This information is knowledge (of things), or understanding³⁷⁴, and so signs exist on account of this knowledge, or understanding.

P₁'' Signs exists on account of knowledge (of things), therefore knowledge (of things) is of more value than signs.

It is not so clear with the relation between signs and objects for, unlike with the relation between signs and knowledge, it is not so clearly demonstrable that words exist on account of the objects themselves. According to the description of the purpose of speech, words (linguistic signs) are demonstrably shown (*conuincitur*) to exist to teach, which is the transferral or imparting of knowledge.

Aug. in illa igitur sententia nostra, quamquam sit falsum res omnes signis suis praeponi oportere, non tamen falsum est omne, quod propter aliud est, uilius esse quam id, propter quod est. cognitio quippe caeni, propter quam hoc nomen est institutum, pluris habenda est ipso nomine, quod eidem caeno praeponendum esse comperimus. non enim ob aliud ista cognitio signo de quo agimus antelata est, nisi quia illud propter hanc, non haec propter illud esse conuincitur.

(26)

0517 The relation of objects and knowledge is not clarified at this stage but, as one has knowledge *of* things, a preliminary causal (if not evaluative) scheme can be established.

³⁷⁴ Augustine's treatment of knowledge and understanding will be considered below (§ 9.1.1).

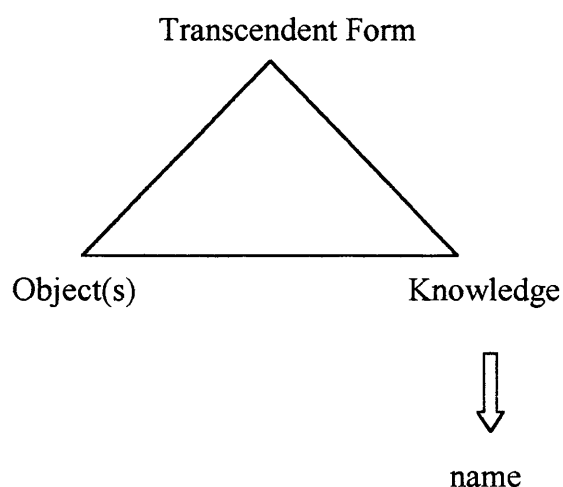
(D24)



Although Augustine does not introduce the issue at this point, the causal relation between object and knowledge is not as straightforwardly empirical as the above schema implies. The fact of the matter is that both the objects and the knowledge of them are ultimately dependent on Forms. The above schema might better be presented as follows.

Causal Schema³⁷⁵:

(D25)



0518 It is of note that language is proposed to have been established not directly because of external objects but rather because humans have such a nature as to understand things, or to be able to think about things. Language is only indirectly related to the external world, and this indirectness is on account of the medium of the human mind. In this way, the institution of language is inextricably bound up with

³⁷⁵Cf. Diagram D9, (0261).

thought, and necessarily this thought is of such a nature as to be ‘sayable’ or expressed in language.

... cognitio quippe caeni, propter quam hoc nomen est institutum...
(26)

6.2.3. Living to Eat and Eating to Live.

0519 Augustine once again restates P₁ with the example of the purpose of eating, for one should eat to live, not, as the glutton, live to eat³⁷⁶. This example of the man is introduced with the effect of enforcing the teleological aspect of communication and for the sake of clarifying the importance of one’s choices in determining one’s actions in putting things to their proper uses.

Aug. ...nam ita cum quidam uorator uentrisque, ut ab apostolo dicitur³⁷⁷, cultor diceret ideo se uiuere, ut uesceretur, non tulit qui audiebat frugi homo et quanto inquit melius ideo uesceretur, ut uiueret. uterque tamen ex eadem ista regula locutus est; nam neque alia de causa ille displicuit, nisi quod uitam suam tam parui penderet, ut eam duceret gutturi uoluptate uiliorem dicendo se propter epulas uiuere, neque hic ob aliud iure laudatur, nisi quod in his duobus, quid propter quid fieret, hoc est, quid cui subiectum esset intellegens cibandum potius ut uiuamus, quam uiuendum ut cibemur admonuit.
(26)

0520 Both individuals in the example base their decisions on P₁ but it is the temperate man who understands which thing (*uiuere* and *edere*) occurs on account of the other. Augustine is concerned in this example with the *uti/frui* distinction which is more fully introduced in the DDC³⁷⁸.

³⁷⁶This is a common parable: cf. Quintilian 9.3.85; Aulus Gellius 19.2.7 (where it is attributed to Socrates).

³⁷⁷Romans 16:18.

³⁷⁸ Augustine received the *uti/frui* distinction from Varro, cf. Lorenz: 1952/53, 34-60; and Pfligersdörffer: 1971, 195-224.

0521 There are things for use and things for enjoyment, and those which are for enjoyment are such as to bring happiness, while those for use are such as to assist in attaining happiness.

res ergo aliae sunt, quibus fruendum est, aliae quibus utendum, aliae quae fruuntur et utuntur. illae quibus fruendum est, nos beatos faciunt. istis quibus utendum est, tendentes ad beatitudinem adiuuamur et quasi adminiculamur, ut ad illas, quae nos beatos faciunt, peruenire atque his inhaerere possimus.
(doctr. chr. 1.3)

Those who enjoy such things as are to be used are hindered in attaining happiness and lose sight the proper objects of enjoyment.

nos uero, qui fruimur et utimur inter utrasque constituti, si eis, quibus utendum est, frui uoluerimus, impeditur cursus noster et aliquando etiam deflectitur, ut ab his rebus, quibus fruendum est, obtinendis uel retardemur uel etiam reuocemur inferiorum amore praepediti.
(doctr. chr. 1.3)

0522 That which makes one truly happy is to return to God and use must be made of the means at our disposal to move towards what is spiritual and eternal.

... si redire in patriam uolumus, ubi beati esse possimus, utendum est hoc mundo, non fruendum, «ut inuisibilia» dei «per ea, quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciantur», hoc est, ut de corporalibus temporalibusque rebus aeterna et spiritalia capiamus.
(doctr. chr. 1.4)

One must use whatever is at one's disposal in this world so as to gain an understanding, through this world, of the eternal.

uti autem, quod in usum uenerit, ad id, quod amas obtinendum referre, si tamen amandum est. nam usus illicitus abusus potius uel abusio nominanda est.
(doctr. chr. 1.4)

0523 The purpose of speech is to teach and it should be used properly so as to assist in gaining knowledge, if it can do this, so as to enable one to move closer to the spiritual and eternal.

0524 The talkative person who teaches in order to talk is such a person who confuses use and enjoyment, for one should talk so as to teach.

*Aug. ...similiter et tu fortasse et quilibet hominum non imperite res
aestimantium dicenti cuiquam loquaci amatorique uerborum ideo doceo, ut
loquar responderetis homo, cur non potius ideo loqueris, ut doceas?*
(26)

Words exist on account of knowledge (*cognitio*) and the purpose of speech is in teaching, and what is taught.

6.2.4. Words and Teaching.

0525 Words are, therefore, in accordance with P₁, of less value than that on account of which they are used. In fact, the use of words is superior to words themselves on account of the fact that words exist so as to be used.

*Aug. ...quod si haec uera sunt, sicuti esse cognoscis, uides profecto, quanto
uerba minoris habenda sint quam id propter quod utimur uerbis, cum ipse
usus uerborum iam sit uerbis anteponendus; uerba enim sunt, ut his utamur...*
(26)

P₁''' Words exist on account of their use, therefore the use of words is of more value than words.

0526 Furthermore, the use of words is so as to teach, so teaching is better than speaking.

*... utimur autem his ad docendum. quanto est igitur melius docere quam loqui,
tanto melior quam uerba locutio. multo ergo melior doctrina quam uerba. sed
cupio audire, quid forte contradicendum putes.*
(26)

P₁'''' The use of words exists on account of teaching, therefore teaching is of more value than the use of words.

6.2.5. Understanding, Things, and Signs.

0527 The inference which Augustine proceeds to make from the preceding arguments is that, since knowledge of things is more valuable than signs of things, knowledge of things signified is superior to knowledge of their signs.

Aug. ... cognitionem rerum quam signa rerum esse cariores. quamobrem cognitio rerum, quae significantur, cognitioni signorum anteferenda est...
(27)

This position is not readily accepted by Adeodatus, for, as in the case of ‘filth’ (*caenum*), perhaps knowledge of the name may be preferable to knowledge of the thing.

Ad. ... si enim, ut caenum nomen melius est ea re quam significat, ita et huius nominis cognitio cognitioni quoque illius rei est anteposenda, quamvis ea cognitione sit ipsum nomen inferius?
(27)

6.2.5.1. Fourfold Division.

0528 Four items are determined to be involved in the above consideration.

1. the name
2. the thing
3. knowledge of the name
4. knowledge of the thing

This division naturally falls into two general divisions: (a) name and thing; (b) knowledge of name and knowledge of thing.

Ad. ...quattuor quippe sunt: nomen et res, cognitio nominis et cognitio rei. sicut ergo primum secundo, cur non et tertium quarto antecellat? sed non antecellat, num etiam subiciendum est?
(27)

0529 The remaining question on the priority of knowledge of thing over knowledge of name is discussed through the example of ‘vice’ (*uitium*). In this example, although

the name may surpass the thing, the knowledge of the thing would appear to surpass the knowledge of the name.

Aug. ... hoc trisyllabum nomen, quod sonat cum dicimus uitium, melius esse quam id quod significat, cum ipsius cognitio nominis multo sit inferior cognitione uitiorum.

(28)

The point which Augustine is making is that while the three syllable word ‘uitium’ is superior to vice itself, knowledge of vice is much better than knowledge of the word ‘uitium’.

0530 The point is passed over as to whether it is clear how one should determine priority amongst different types of knowledge. The primary point has been settled, namely, that the knowledge of things signified is preferable to the signs themselves.

Aug. ... deinde si qua cognitio cui cognitioni praeferenda sit, non hic facile est explicare. satis habeo, quod effectum est cognitionem rerum, quae significantur, etsi non cognitione signorum ipsis tamen signis esse potiore.

(28)

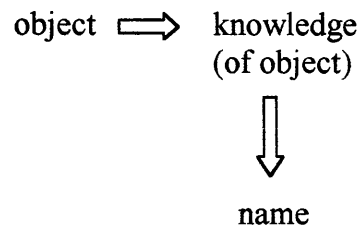
0531 With regard to the relationship between knowledge of names and knowledge of things it is possible to apply the conclusions reached above (§ 6.2 - § 6.2.5) to the issue. For as the relation between object and knowledge was one whereby knowledge, as knowledge of the object, was caused by the object, so too may this relation be seen between name, which is also an object, and knowledge of the name. The causal relation of name to word depends on the fact that one hears the word and, therefore, gains knowledge of the name.

(D26)

name \Rightarrow knowledge
(of name)

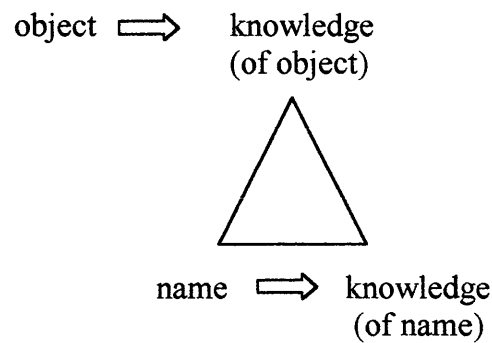
This causal relationship may be considered with that relating an object to knowledge, and knowledge to name.

(D27)



These two causal schemata may now be united to give the following series of relations.

(D28)



0532 The issue surrounding the relation of the knowledge of the name with the knowledge of the thing is one which concerns Augustine's approach to language acquisition³⁷⁹. After clarifying the possibility of the confusion caused by ambiguity and the need for contextualisation in the process of information transfer Augustine is finally able to return to the solution, proposed above (*v. sup.* § 4.2), for the correlation of items with the terms which refer to them. This solution is that of direct ostension and is discussed under the class of things shown through performance.

³⁷⁹ On language acquisition see below (§ 8.1.3).

7. Classification (2.2): Things Shown by Performance.

0533 The final classification of communication remaining to be considered is that involving things which are, when possible, shown through performance. These things are such as can be shown, or demonstrated, in themselves such as the act of walking, sitting, lying down, speaking itself, and numerous other things of the same kind.

Aug. ...quare iam illud magis magisque discutiamus, quale sit genus rerum, quas sine signis monstrari posse dicebamus per se ipsas, ut loqui, ambulare, sedere, iacere atque huius modi cetera.

(28)

7.1. Ostension (2).

0534 After the analysis of signs shown through signs (§ 5) and things shown through signs (§ 6), discussion returns to the question as to how one in fact correlates a linguistic term with any item which it signifies. This issue is of great philosophical concern for the question as to how the meaning of a term is determined is fundamentally related to the question as to how one gains knowledge of any particular item, or kind of item. The question as to how one gains knowledge of any item in turn raises the question as to whether there are in fact any such items which are, essentially, knowable.

0535 Augustine is, basically, a Platonist and as such holds that there are items which are, essentially, knowable (knowable in theory, at any rate). These items are Forms. How one determines the meaning of a term is, therefore, determined by how one gains knowledge of any item. To know an item as a member of class *X* one must explain how one has knowledge of the essential items, which are Forms.

0536 This may be adequately described by recourse to ostensive definition. An individual x is shown an example of dog, y , by having it pointed out to her, and the word ‘dog’, z , said. x receives, via perception, a formal impression of y , Y . On encountering another example of y , y' , x recognises it as such, due to the formal information received on the first encounter. x is now in the position to denote y' with the term z because x is able to determine the meaning of z by means of the knowledge she has of Y .

0537 This model is clearly inadequate and leaves a number of crucial questions unanswered. All of the central issues are interrelated and basically reduce to one fundamental problem, which is concerned with how one gains knowledge of items within the world. This problem is basically that which is raised by the Paradox of Enquiry introduced in Plato’s *Meno* (80d-e).

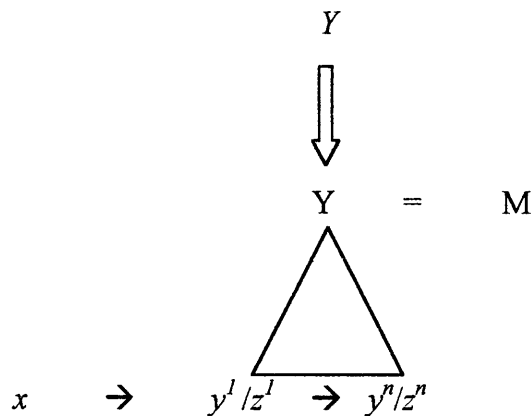
0538 Firstly, it is unclear how x knows what is specifically being referred to, in the initial act of pointing. This issue has been raised by Augustine in the initial discussion of ostensive definition (v. *sup.* § 4) and as yet remains to be fully explained. However, it seems clear that this problem is considered to be a question of induction. That is to say, on y ’s being pointed out to x on the first occasion, x gains a preliminary sense of what z specifically is signifying, and then on a second ostensive occasion x gains a clearer sense of what is signified, and so on. As is clear from such a model, x only gains an inductive sense of what it is that is being signified by the pointer (who is symbolic of the socio-linguistic group within which x lives). Therefore, x has an inductive sense of what is signified by particular terms within her socio-linguistic group³⁸⁰.

³⁸⁰ It should be noted that the description given above for the relation of words to things is rather similar to Aristotle’s discussion of concept formation (cf. *Posterior Analytics* 2.19). In this respect the account of the relation of words to things is not specifically Platonic, but the account of concepts themselves is Platonic due to its involving Transcendent Forms.

0539 An item, as Augustine makes clear (cf. “... *intellegis omne coloratum uisibile esse et omne uisibile coloratum...*” DM 12), may consist of a number of different qualities, and this relates to the question of specificity of signification. The question refers to how one knows what particular aspect, or quality, is being signified. Related to this problem is that as to how x gains knowledge of Y through seeing one sample, y , for the Forms which are accessed by the human mind through material objects are obscured by the material aspect of the world, as corporeal reality. Therefore, x 's knowledge of Y is rather close to what might also be termed inductive knowledge, and this sort of ‘knowledge’ does not accord with the strict standard to which Augustine requires for true knowledge. That said, as will be seen (cf. § 9 and § 11), Augustine is willing to accept a less strict form of earthly knowledge which may assist in the movement towards true knowledge. This less strict form of knowledge is put to use (cf. DDC 1.3-4) so as to achieve true understanding.

0540 The model which was introduced for the discussion of signs (D5, 0138) may be usefully applied to this situation, as encountered by x . In this model x encounters a number of samples of y over the course of her life and establishes a concept of y , which, although formal, is unclear and opaque to her understanding. Over time x gains a clearer understanding of y simply by having greater familiarity with samples of it and this moves her towards a true knowledge of Y itself. In tandem with this process, x is ostensibly shown that z signifies y and also proceeds to gain a clearer understanding as to what the specific signification of z is, and so, together with her increased understanding of y she can also gain a clearer sense of the meaning of z . In the following diagram the following symbols will be employed: Y for the imperfectly grasped formal concept and Y for the Transcendent Form, and M will stand for meaning/signification.

(D29)



0541 The central concern for Augustine is, therefore, to attempt to determine how it is that one can move from Y to Y , that is from an imprecise knowledge of the Form, based on perception and reason applied to the material world, to knowledge of the essential item which is the true object of knowledge, that is, the Transcendental Form. An answer to this will also answer how it is that one can, individually, determine the meaning of a linguistic term, for one will do so via the essential and knowable item, that is the Form³⁸¹.

0542 A secondary answer must be found to satisfy the thesis discussed in the DM, namely that language is employed so as to teach, or remind, others. For even if Augustine does satisfy himself in answering the primary question described above (0541), there still remains the problem as to the intentions of others in applying terms to objects. For although one may have accurate and firm knowledge of an item and may be able to determine the meaning of a term, which one uses to signify that item, by means of this knowledge, nevertheless, one only has an inductive knowledge of how, specifically, other members of one's socio-linguistic community apply, or understand themselves to apply, that same term.

³⁸¹ The role of transcendent forms in Augustine's analysis will be discussed at greater length in due course (v. *inf.* § 9.3.2).

0543 It is in light of the above difficulties that Augustine's reintroduction of direct ostension (v. *sup.* § 4.2) must be understood.

0544 After the thorough consideration of signs which has preceded (cf. § 5 and § 6), the question as to whether the preliminary conclusion reached at DM 6-7 (v. *sup.* 0195) may be reconsidered.

Aug. omniane tibi uidentur, quae interrogati mox agere possumus, sine signo posse monstrari, an aliquid excipis?

(29)

7.1.1. Specificity (2).

0545 The question of specificity, or inscrutability, is once again raised as a possible problem in ostensive definition. Adeodatus responds, with a reconsideration of specificity, to Augustine's question as to whether, after the conclusions reached regarding signs and things shown through signs, there are things which can be shown through performance and which require no recourse to signs.

0546 The only possible exceptions which Adeodatus can now, on reconsideration, suggest as terms definable by means of performance are the acts of speaking and teaching.

Ad. ego uero etiam atque etiam genus hoc totum considerans nihil adhuc inuenio, quod sine signo ualeat doceri, nisi forte locutionem, et si forte id ipsum quispiam quaerat, quid sit docere. uideo enim me quicquid post eius interrogationem fecero, ut discat, ab ea ipsa re non <discedere>³⁸² quam sibi demonstrari cupit...

(29)

Speech and teaching are introduced as exceptions on account of the fact that if one is asked what speaking is, then no matter what one says one must be speaking so as to instruct the enquirer.

...nisi forte loquentem me interroget, quid sit loqui; quicquid enim dixero, ut eum doceam, loquar necesse est.

(6)

The same point is taken to hold for teaching, for if one is asked what teaching is, then no matter how one teaches one must be teaching so as to instruct the enquirer.

0547 In the example of walking, it is suggested that if one were asked, while not engaged in the actual activity, what walking was, and were to immediately demonstrate it by walking, there would be an issue as to how the enquirer could determine how to interpret the demonstration. For, the enquirer may suppose that only the amount of walking exhibited is what the term ‘walking’ means and so on encountering some other person who walks further, or not as far, will suppose that this other person has not walked at all. If this holds for ‘walking’, it will hold for all terms of a similar status, except, as already noted, ‘speaking’ and ‘teaching’.

... si me cessantem, ut dictum est, uel aliud agentem roget quispiam, quid sit ambulare, et ego statim ambulando eum quod rogauit sine signo coner docere, unde cauebo, ne id tantum putet esse ambulare quantum ego ambulauero? quod si putauerit, decipietur; quisquis enim plus minusue quam ego ambulauerit, hunc ille ambulasse non arbitrabitur. et quod de hoc uno uerbo dixi, transit in omnia, quae sine signo monstrari posse consenseram, praeter duo illa, quae excepimus.

(29)

0548 The proposed problem, raised by Adeodatus, and agreed with by Augustine (“*Aug. accipio quidem istud...*” DM 30), is further clarified by Wittgenstein. Although Wittgenstein is discussing ostensive definition in particular, the general point holds for the problem Adeodatus is raising for direct ostension³⁸³.

The definition of the number two, “That is called ‘two’” - pointing to two nuts - is perfectly exact. - But how can two be defined like that? The person one gives the definition to doesn’t know what one wants to call “two”; he will suppose that “two” is the name given to *this* group of nuts! - He *may* suppose this; but perhaps he does not. He might make the opposite mistake; when I want to assign a name to this group of nuts, he might understand it as a numeral. And he might equally well take the name of a person, of which I

³⁸² For reference to this variant reading cf. Appendix 2.

³⁸³ Augustinian ‘direct’ ostension that is (v. *sup.* § 4.2).

gave an ostensive definition, as that of a colour, of a race, or even of a point of a compass. That is to say: an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in *every* case.

(Wittgenstein, *PI* 28)

0549 Augustine does not confront the difficult problem of specificity immediately but firstly wants to dispose of the question concerning the status of terms such as ‘speaking’ and ‘teaching’.

0550 The status of ‘teaching’ is initially considered. Augustine proposes that speaking is one thing and teaching another. This introduces a method of analysis involving genus and species, introduced earlier in the dialogue (DM 9-10). The principle is applied that because every *x* is *y*, this does not entail that every *y* is *x*, as in the example where every horse is an animal but not every animal is a horse.

Therefore, being aware of this *caveat*, Adeodatus determines that teaching and speaking would only be the same if this can be shown not to be a case of genus and species and, therefore, if every *x* were shown to be *y* and every *y* to be *x*. However, as is clear that there is teaching with signs other than words, teaching and speaking are not the same. Therefore, speaking would appear to be, according to the dictum that the purpose of speech is to teach (DM 1), a species of the genus of teaching. This is to say, all speech is teaching but not all teaching is speech.

Aug. ... nonne tibi uidetur aliud esse loqui, aliud docere?
Ad. uidetur sane; nam si esset idem, non doceret quisquam nisi loquens. cum uero et aliis signis praeter uerba multa doceamus, quis de ista differentia dubitauerit?

(30)

0551 Augustine, however, was specifically concerned with whether anything could be shown without a sign. Although not all teaching involves speaking, speech is a species of the wider genus of signs and, therefore, the broader question is as to whether there is a difference between teaching and signifying.

Aug. quid? docere et significare nihilne inter se an aliquid differunt?
(30)

0552 Adeodatus accepts that they are the same and that it follows that one signifies in order to teach. If someone were to say the reverse of this, namely, that one teaches in order to signify would be refuted by what is called the proposal which was given above (*superiore sententia*).

Aug. nonne recte dicit, qui dicit ideo nos significare, ut doceamus?
Ad. recte prorsus.
Aug. quid? si dicat alius ideo nos docere, ut significemus, nonne facile superiore sententia refelletur?
Ad. ita est.

(30)

What Augustine means by the '*superior sententia*' is not immediately apparent.

However, the wording, such that one signifies *in order to* teach, suggests P₁, introduced at DM 25 (cf. 0503-0504).

P₁ If *x* exists on account of *y*, then *y* is of more value than *x*

Although this argument does not appear to be directly applicable to the situation under discussion in DM 30, Augustine's use of the term '*sententia*' signals the way in which the application of P₁ is, in fact, applicable. '*Sententia*', notably, is used to describe P₁ at DM 26, where the man who lives to eat confuses the proper use of things. Likewise it is argued that someone who teaches so as to speak, and not *vice versa*, confuses the proper order whereby what is used to an end is inferior to that end. The proper use to which speaking is put, is teaching, so teaching is, in accordance with P₁, superior to speaking.

0553 The person who said one teaches in order to signify would be mistaken in like manner to the glutton ("...*vorator ventrisque... cultor...*" DM 26) or the lover of words ("...*loquaci amatorique verborum...*" DM 26). The same principle is applied in both cases:

P₁ (a) Signifying exists on account of teaching, therefore teaching is of more value than signifying

P₁ (b) Teaching exists on account of signifying, therefore signifying is of more value than teaching

However, as seen in the argument in DM 26, the person applying (b) is confusing the proper use of the items under discussion. The proper use of signifying is so as to teach, so, according to Augustine's analysis in DM 26, the correct application of P₁ is (a) and so teaching is the cause of signifying. Augustine, applying a form of the genus-species distinction, proposes that if signifying is on account of teaching and teaching is not on account of signifying, then teaching and signifying are different.

Aug. si ergo significamus, ut doceamus, non docemus, ut significemus, aliud est docere aliud significare.

(30)

0554 With the point agreed upon that teaching and signifying are different, the argument quickly proceeds to establish that someone who teaches what teaching is, nevertheless, does so by signifying.

Aug. nunc illud responde, utrum qui docet, quid sit docere, significando id agat an aliter.

Ad. non uideo, quomodo aliter possit.

(30)

Therefore, teaching is not an example of something which can be shown without signs. For signifying and teaching are different things, and teaching can only be shown through signifying and is not shown by means of itself, as Adeodatus had proposed (DM 29; 0546).

Aug. falsum igitur paulo ante dixisti doceri rem posse sine signis, cum quaeritur, quid sit ipsum docere, quando ne hoc quidem uidemus sine significatione agi posse, cum aliud esse significare aliud docere concesseris. si enim diuersa sunt, sicut apparet, neque hoc nisi per illud ostenditur, non per se utique ostenditur, sicut tibi uisum erat.

(30)

0555 As regards speaking, the last case of something which may be shown through itself and not through signs, even this is problematic for, although it may show itself, it is a member of the class of signs. Speech cannot, therefore, show itself without signifying and so the discussion has, so far, failed to demonstrate something which can be taught without signs

Aug. ...quam ob rem nihil adhuc inuentum est, quod monstrari per se ipsum queat praeter locutionem, quae inter alia se quoque significat; quae tamen cum etiam ipsa signum sit, nondum prorsus exstat, quod sine signis doceri posse uideatur.

(30)

0556 Three preliminary conclusions have been reached³⁸⁴:

1. Nothing is taught without signs
2. Knowledge is more valuable than the signs through which one gains knowledge
3. Not everything signified is superior to its own sign

Aug. confectum est igitur et nihil sine signis doceri et cognitionem ipsam signis, quibus cognoscimus cariorem nobis esse oportere, quamuis non omnia, quae significantur, possint suis signis esse potiora.
Ad. ita uidetur.

(31)

0557 At this point in the discussion the most important of these conclusions is that nothing is taught without signs. This conclusion is, however, invalid³⁸⁵. The question of specificity, and the need for interpretation, in ostension neither proves that word meaning is never taught through ostension nor, more importantly, does it prove that all teaching is through words, or signs.

0558 “[I]t does not follow from

- (a) Some teaching is effected through words or signs,
- plus

³⁸⁴ These conclusions follow on from the discussion of ‘*caenum*’ (DM 25, v. *sup.* 0508 ff.)

- (b) All teaching about words or signs is effected through words or signs,
that
- (c) All teaching whatsoever is through words or signs” (Burnyeat: 1987, 13).

7.1.2. Doubt.

0559 Augustine is aware that the conclusion in (c), that all teaching is through words or signs, is a generalisation and needs to be reconsidered. In addition to the three conclusions reached above (DM 31; 0556), with much effort³⁸⁶, Augustine requires a firm understanding as to whether these conclusions are held in such a way that there can be no doubt about them.

Aug. quanto tandem circuitu res tantilla peracta sit, meministine quaeso? nam ex quo inter nos uerba iaculamur, quod tam diu fecimus, haec tria ut inuenirentur laboratum est: utrum nihil sine signis possit doceri et utrum sint quaedam signa rebus, quas significant, praeferenda, et utrum melior quam signa sit rerum ipsa cognitio. sed quartum est, quod breuiter abs te uellem cognoscere, utrumnam ista inuenta sic putes, ut iam de his dubitare non possis.

(31)

0560 Adeodatus shows himself to have progressed far over the course of the discussion and to be circumspect in his approach to Augustine’s question. The language employed in his answer is rather interesting and both refers back to and, as Augustine so often does in his writings, anticipates themes which will soon be introduced and discussed.

Ad. uellem quidem tantis ambagibus atque anfractibus esset ad certa peruentum. sed et ista rogatio tua nescio quomodo me sollicitat et ab assensione deterret - uideris enim mihi non hoc de me fuisse quaesiturus, nisi

³⁸⁵ Burnyeat: 1987, 13. The following demonstration of the invalid nature of this conclusion is drawn from Burnyeat: 1987, 13.

³⁸⁶ Augustine is concerned that Adeodatus appreciate that no matter how much work has gone into a conclusion one must be willing to dispose of it if it shows itself to be invalid. Again this reflects the importance of use, for the goal is truth and investigation is a tool employed so as to arrive at this goal.

haberes quod contradiceres - et ipsa rerum implicatio totum me inspicere ac securum respondere non sinit uerentem, ne quid in tantis inuolucris lateat, quod acies mentis meae lustrare non possit.

(31)

0561 Adeodatus describes the preceding discussion as one which is comparable to an attempt to arrive at security after a long and circuitous path (“... *tantis ambagibus*³⁸⁷ *atque anfractibus... ad certa peruentum...*”). The image of an intellectual journey is one which Augustine often employs, regularly with regard to the destination reached (“... *peruentum...*”) as a safe haven (“... *ad certa...*”) which is the happy life gained through reason and divine grace. A similar idea is seen in the opening of the *de beata uita* but with the image of a voyage.

si ad philosophiae portum, e quo iam in beatae uitae regionem solumque proceditur... ratione institutus cursus et uoluntas ipsa perduceret, nescio, utrum temere dixerim multo minoris numeri homines ad eum peruenturos fuisse, quamuis nunc quoque, ut uidemus, rari admodum paucique perueniant... quotusquisque cognosceret, quo sibi nitendum esset quauē redeundum, nisi aliquando et inuitos contraque obnitentes aliqua tempestas, quae stultis uidetur aduersa, in optatissimam terram nescientes errantesque conpingeret?

(*beata v. 1*)

Augustine also introduces many of the same themes in the *de animae quantitate*.

A. hoc initio te admonui et postulaui, ut patienter ferres aliquantum circuitum nostrum.. nosse hoc enim plane ac tenere uolumus, si fieri potest... si... cupiditatem istam refrenare non potes, qua tibi persuasisti ratione peruenire ad ueritatem, multi et longi circuitus tibi tolerandi sunt, ut te non ratio adducat nisi ea, quae sola ratio dicenda est, id est uera ratio; et non solum uera, sed ita certa, et ab omni similitudine falsitatis aliena, si tamen ullo modo haec ab homine inueniri potest, ut nullae disputationes falsae aut uerisimiles ab ea te possint traducere.

(*an. quant. 12*)

In the specific context of the DM the image of the application of reason to a problem as a journey recalls the example of the road to Larissa from the Plato’s *Meno* (97a-b).

In the *Meno* the proposal is forwarded that the best guide to Larissa would be the person who has travelled there himself, with the implication that the most secure

reasoning is that which one has worked through and understood for oneself³⁸⁸. This is what would appear to constitute knowledge, in opposition to correct opinion (cf. Plato, *Meno* 98a and 85c-d).

0562 The terminology of ‘*ambages*’ and ‘*anfractus*’, in addition to the general reference to the circumlocutions and digressions which have occurred in the course of the discussion between Augustine and Adeodatus, also has the specific application to the discussion which has just ended. That is to say, the term ‘*ambages*’ may also be used to refer to linguistic ambiguity³⁸⁹, while the sense of circumlocution in ‘*anfractus*’ reflects the fact that the discussion has recently returned to the point which initiated it. At DM 29 the point where discussion of ostension was left, namely, with things which may be shown through themselves by performance (DM 6), is revisited.

0563 The raising of the question as to whether there is any doubt concerning their conclusions causes Adeodatus to be wary of offering his assent. Assent (*assensio*) would appear to be an application influenced by the Stoic term (συνκατάθεσις).

... nunc de adsensione atque adprobatione, quam Graeci συνκατάθεσις
vocant, pauca dicemus...

(Cicero, *Acad.* 2.37)

This is perhaps enforced by the fact that Augustine, in his response to Adeodatus (DM 31; v. *inf.* 0566), uses the equivalent term ‘*adprobatione*’ cited in the Cicero passage above (*Acad.* 2.37). Augustine also employs (DM 31; v. *inf.* 0566) a rather vivid image in which he describes things which are held with an easy and ready assent (“... *ea quae prona et procliua adprobatione tenebamus*”) as being torn from one’s hands (“... *quasi extorquentur e manibus*”). This imagery recalls Zeno’s description of scientific knowledge, comparing it to various stages in the clasping of the hand.

³⁸⁷ Cf. Ovid, *M.* 8.161; Vergil, *A.* 6.29.

³⁸⁸ This point will be seen to be central to the thesis of the DM (v. *inf.* § 7.1.3, § 9, and § 11).

³⁸⁹ The terminology of a circuitous or roundabout route, together with the idea of linguistic ambiguity, also recalls the use of the image from the DD (8.6-10) of the crossroads as an image for ambiguity.

et hoc quidem Zeno gestu conficiebat. nam cum extensis digitis aduersam manum ostenderat, "uisum" inquiebat "huius modi est"; dein cum paulum digitos contraxerat, "adsensus huius modi"; tum cum plane conpresserat pugnumque fecerat, conpressionem illam esse dicebat, qua ex similitudine etiam nomen ei rei, quod ante non fuerat, κατάληψιν imposuit; cum autem laeuam manum admouerat et illum pugnum arte uehementerque conpresserat, scientiam talem esse dicebat, cuius compotem nisi sapientem esse neminem.
(Cicero, *Acad.* 2.145)

0564 Adeodatus' withholding of giving his assent until he is sure of all of the issues is an application of the rule concerning ambiguous terms stated by Augustine (DM 22)³⁹⁰. However, the role of doubt (*dubitatio*) and the with-holding of assent may also be influenced by the Sceptics' suspension of judgement (ἡ ἐποχή)³⁹¹.

0565 The language used by Adeodatus in the passage above also suggests themes which are to be taken up over the remainder of the dialogue. Most particular are the themes of inner vision, which is suggested, although not directly implied by Adeodatus, by the phrase '*acies mentis*'³⁹², and the idea of understanding coming through a kind of inner enlightenment or illumination (*lustrare*) which would appear to be a sort of complete vision of all of the aspects of a problem (*totum inspicere*).

0566 Augustine praises such careful hesitation and tranquillity of mind.

Aug. dubitationem tuam non inuitus accipio; significat enim animum minime temerarium, quae custodia tranquillitatis est maxima. nam difficillimum omnino est non perturbari, cum ea, quae prona et proclia adprobatione tenebamus, contrariis disputationibus labefactantur et quasi extorquentur e manibus. quare, ut aequum est, bene consideratis perspectisque rationibus cedere, ita incognita pro cognitis habere periculosum; metus est enim ne, cum saepe subruuntur, quae firmissime statuta et mansura praesumimus, in tantum odium uel timorem rationis incidamus, ut ne ipsi quidem perspicuae ueritati fides habenda videatur.

(31)

³⁹⁰ v. *sup.* 0479. This approach appears to be Stoic, cf. Simplicius, in *Cat.* 24.13-20.

³⁹¹ Cf. Diogenes Laertius 4.28; 4.32-33; Cicero, *Acad.* 1.43-46.

³⁹² Adeodatus means something more like 'mental acuity', however, the language reflects the concept which Augustine will employ to discuss such things as mental acuity and the grasping of intelligible items.

The hatred or mistrust of reason (*odium uel timorem rationis*), which may result from the overturning of a conclusion one had supposed valid, may refer to the misology (μισόλογοι) in Plato's *Phaedo* (89d-e). Also, Augustine refers to the danger of having a lack of diligence or even halting the search for truth altogether because one has gained a false opinion that one has found the truth.

... *qui error omnino populorum est, falsa opinione inuentae a se ueritatis nec diligenter homines quaerunt, si qui quaerunt, et a quaerendi uoluntate auertuntur...*

(*Acad. 2.1*)³⁹³

7.1.3. The Birdcatcher.

0567 The example of the Birdcatcher is introduced as a refutation of the proposal that all teaching is achieved through language, or signs. It is enough for present purposes that it be shown that some men (*quosdam homines*) can be taught some things (*de quibusdam rebus tametsi non omnibus*) without signs.

... *satis est namque ad rem et de quibusdam rebus tametsi non omnibus et quosdam homines doceri posse sine signo.*

(32)

0568 One can imagine a situation where someone, *x*, who is ignorant of the craft of birdcatching (*ignarus deceptionis auium*), encounters a birdcatcher (*obuiam fieret aucupi*) who is not at present engaged in this act (*non tamen aucupanti*) but is on his way to do so (*iter agent*) and has all of the equipment for doing so (*armis... suis instructo*). When *x* sees the birdcatcher he is filled with wonder (*admirans*) and reflects (*cogitaret*) and attempts to learn (*quaereret*) what the man's equipment means (*quid sibi hominis ille uellet ornatus*), and to this end he follows the birdcatcher

³⁹³ I am indebted to King: 1995, 134 n.73, for the reference to Plato's *Phaedo* and Augustine's *contra Academicos*.

(*premeret gradum*). The birdcatcher, for his part, on seeing x's attention focused upon him (*adtentum*), in the desire to show himself (*ostentandi se studio*), carries out the act of birdcatching. In such a way, the birdcatcher would teach (*doceret*) that spectator (*spectatorem*), x, what he wanted to know (*quod ille scire cupiebat*) with no act of signifying (*nullo significatu*) but by means of the thing itself (*re ipsa*).

Aug. ...sed age nunc expeditius retractemus, utrum recte ista dubitanda putaueris; nam quaero abs te, si quisquam ignarus deceptionis auium, quae calamis et uisco affectantur, obuiam fieret aucupi armis quidem suis instructo non tamen aucupanti, sed iter agenti, quo uiso premeret gradum secumque, ut fit, admirans cogitaret et quaereret, quidnam sibi hominis ille uellet ornatus, auceps autem cum in se uideret adtentum ostentandi se studio cannas expediret et prope animaduersam aliquam auiculam fistula et accipitre figeret, subiret et caperet, nonne illum spectatorem suum doceret nullo significatu³⁹⁴, sed re ipsa quod ille scire cupiebat?

(32)

0569 This example presents a resolution to the difficulties evident in ostensive definition as presented in the DM. The 'learning' involves a experience of directly perceiving not only a particular object or set of objects but rather of viewing a complete process together with all of its individual parts. Augustine also uses the image of birdcatching, on the question of the immateriality of the soul, in the *de animae quantitate*.

A. cur ergo puer multo amplius itineris conficiebam sine defectu, cum aucupandi studio in ambulando exercerer, quam adulescens, cum me ad alia studia, quibus sedere magis cogebar, contulissem...

(*an. quant.* 36)

The context of this passage is rather different to that of the DM, but it does, however, provide an insight into Augustine's use of the image. Firstly, it is a nostalgic glance back to his youth which focuses upon the place of play and enjoyment in the learning process, the learner should be filled with wonder ("*admirans*" DM 32) and should want to know ("*scire cupiebat*" DM 32). Secondly, and most significantly, there is the

³⁹⁴ 'Significatu' is the the act of signifying, v. *sup.* § 5.2.1.1.

contrast, in the *de animae quantitate* passage, between the studious life of the young adult and the outdoor life of the young child. The contrast highlights learning through direct experience and learning through study.

0570 The use of the birdcatcher image to represent the attempt to grasp at truth is also used in the *contra Academicos*. In this passage the image is one of grasping at the fleeting intelligible item and bringing it down to the level of human understanding, where it is grasped in a debased form.

...*philocalia...amor pulchritudinis...sed illa uisco libidinis detracta caelo suo et inclusa cauea populari uiciniam tamen nominis tenuit ad commonendum aucupem, ne illam contemnat. facile euadit, facile reuolat hoc genus auium* [philosophia] *multis inclusis multum mirantibus.*
(*Acad.* 2.7)

The birdcatcher image is one which Augustine regularly employs³⁹⁵ and may be influenced by the idea of the bird as a mediator between the earth and the heavens³⁹⁶, and so is a natural image for the idea of transcending the material world of experience in the attempt to grasp the intelligible truths of transcendental reality. However, there is perhaps the more obvious source from the Aviary image (“...περιστερεῶνά τινα παντοδαπῶν ὀρνίθων...” *Tht.* 197d) in the *Theaetetus* of Plato (196d-199c).

0571 The use of the image in the *Theaetetus* is also centrally involved with the question of how knowledge is acquired. The differences in Augustine’s image are significant and revealing³⁹⁷. The Birdcatcher may be interpreted on various levels, all of which reinforce each other and accord with Augustine’s general thesis. Firstly, the birdcatcher himself, as in the Aviary image in Plato, may be seen as one who is involved in the act of grasping discrete items of knowledge (as represented by birds) and is employing his equipment so as to gain this knowledge. The equipment is a

³⁹⁵ Cf. *util. cred.* 2, where the birdcatchers are the Manicheans preying on the thirst for knowledge of youths so as to ensnare them.

³⁹⁶ As in the role of the bird in divination (*auspicium*).

metaphor for the practical tools which one is in possession of to this end, namely, reason and the practical tool of argumentation. In this sense, the birdcatcher is an example of knowledge acquisition. Secondly, the birdcatcher is instructing the spectator in the use of the equipment so as to capture the bird, or piece of knowledge, and in this sense is a teacher. Just as Augustine is teaching Adeodatus in the DM, for Augustine is showing Adeodatus how to both use his own reason and, notably in the final section which begins immediately after the birdcatcher example (DM 32) and in which the dialogue significantly turns into a monologue, is demonstrating how he himself, that is Augustine, employs his reason to the issue at hand so that Adeodatus can watch and learn. As Adeodatus has previously observed (DM 31), he is unsure of his abilities to disentangle all of the intricacies which they have been discussing. The Birdcatcher example also reveals that one must have both an awareness of what is to be known and the rational tools to achieve this knowledge. That is to say, the information may be available to one, in its entirety, but unless one has the clarity of intellectual vision one will be unable to turn this information into knowledge. That knowledge involves both perceptual³⁹⁷ awareness and the exercise of reason is seen in the *de animae quantitate*.

A. quia, quamquam sit aliud sensus, aliud scientia, illud tamen non latere utrique commune est, ut ipsi homini et bestiae, quamvis plurimum differant, animal tamen esse commune est. non latet enim, quicquid animae adparet, siue per temperationem corporis siue per intellegentiae puritatem; atque illud primum sensus, hoc autem alterum scientia sibi uindicauit...non continuo esse scientiam, si quid non latet, sed si per rationem non latet...
(*an. quant.* 58)

³⁹⁷ Although an analysis of the Aviary in the *Theaetetus* is beyond the scope of this discussion, it should be made clear that Plato rejects the image as an adequate analogy.

³⁹⁸ It should be noted that Augustine often uses 'knowledge' in a weak sense, concerning knowledge gained through material reality, and in a stronger sense, concerning knowledge of intelligibles. Also, the former is often used as a metaphor for the latter, this occurs in the DM where Augustine uses the image of intellectual 'sight'.

0572 Thirdly, in the Birdcatcher it is highly significant that the spectator does not capture a piece, or item, of knowledge, like a bird, but rather gains understanding through an awareness and comprehension of a series of items involved in a complex process. This fact touches upon the third proposal forwarded in the *Theaetetus* that knowledge is true judgement with an account (*Tht.* 203e ff.). In the Birdcatcher, one has all of the information but, crucially, one also understands it.

0573 To return to the specifics of the context within which the Birdcatcher occurs there are a number of factors which are seen to be necessary for the demonstration to be successful and to avoid any sort of signification. The birdcatcher should not be engaged in the act (*non... aucupanti*), but should be ready to do so (*armis... suis instructo... iter agenti*) and the spectator must be interested intellectually (*admirans cogitaret*) and should desire to find out about what the birdcatcher is about to do (*quaereret*). The birdcatcher should then demonstrate (*ostendandi*) the act by simply doing it (*figeret subiret caperet... re ipsa*) and without any intention to signify (*nullo significatu*).

0574 As Burnyeat points out (1987, 13), Augustine has chosen a phrase which could equally well be applied to a question concerning the meaning of a word to demonstrate that to which the spectator's interest is directed: "... *quaereret quidnam sibi hominis ille uellet ornatus*" (DM 32). This phrase could be reformulated as: "*quaereret quidnam sibi hominis illud uellet uerbum*". In this way, Augustine demonstrates an example of ostension whereby something may be learned without words or signs, and a means whereby word meaning may be learned. It should be said that this does not in itself answer the problem of how one can be sure the observer

will identify the right feature³⁹⁹. There will be further discussion of these issues below in the consideration of language acquisition (§ 8.1.3).

0575 The image of the Birdcatcher can, in sum, be seen to involve a learning process where there exists no prior concept but simply an openness and acceptance of the whole process. It is a picture of one with no conceptual, or verbal, prior knowledge of the thing observed, or under consideration, one simply observes. In this example there is demonstration proper and a presenting of the whole process of birdcatching, where the observer is able to visually take in all of the information and then to apply intelligence to comprehend what birdcatching involves. The teaching is of the thing itself in its totality, while, in addition, the picture presented is a explanation of how one learns by looking and seeing, and understanding.

7.1.4. Specificity (3).

0576 The question of specificity is reconsidered in the light of the Birdcatcher example. Adeodatus is unable to see how this example differs from that of walking.

*Ad. metuo, ne quid hic tale sit, quale de illo dixi, qui quaerit, quid sit
ambulare; neque enim uideo et hic totum illud aucupium esse monstratum.*
(32)

The additional factor which must be clarified so as to fully realise the distinction which Augustine is introducing is that of intelligence.

*Aug. facile est hac cura te exuere; addo enim, si ille intellegens esset, ut ex
hoc quod uidit totum illud genus artis agnosceret...*
(32)

The role of intelligence is central to Augustine's solution to the problems of specificity in ostension. When one is presented, in a direct way, with a complete

³⁹⁹ A possible solution to this will be discussed below (cf. 0576 ff., esp. 0609).

picture of a procedure then one is in the position to apply one's intelligence to the available facts so as to understand the thing which one has been shown. It is important that one has received all of the information, and although one has a complex of detailed information, nevertheless, one can extricate and understand the essential elements of the process. The Birdcatcher, as mentioned above (0571), is a simplified representation of the dialogue as a whole, for Adeodatus has all of the information to hand and, through the application of intelligence, the fundamental facts of speech and its purpose are drawn out from the mass of potentially accessible information which he has stored in his mind. Indeed, as will be discussed (§ 8 and § 9), one has in mind, through observing something, all that one needs, in terms of information, to have knowledge of that thing and one must access this information, either by recall or by being reminded⁴⁰⁰. It is also notable that the role of intelligence dispels simple perception *of*, or perhaps by adding intelligence to this simple level of perception raises it to a more conscious level of perception. The Birdcatcher demonstrates a process which is both general in its scope but which is also focused and directed by the application of intelligence. One intentionally observes *x* performing *y*, but with no prior judgement about what is being performed.

0577 The thesis, wherein there are things which can be shown without signs, with the addition of the ability to reason about the information which one is receiving, allows for a broad range of items to fall within its scope. Items such as walking, which had previously been rejected, can now be seen to fall within the class of things shown without signs.

*Ad. hoc etiam ego possum illi addere: si enim sit bene intellegens, paucis passibus ambulatione monstrata totum quid sit ambulare cognoscet.
Aug. facias per me licet nec tantum nihil resisto, uerum etiam faueo...*

(32)

⁴⁰⁰ The important role of recall will be considered in due course (§8.1.5).

There are, then, some people who can be taught some things without signs.

Aug. ...uides enim ab utroque nostrum id effici, ut quaedam quidam doceri sine signis queant falsumque illud sit... nihil esse omnino, quod sine signis possit ostendi.

(32)

7.1.5. Divine Ostension.

0578 In the Birdcatcher example the birdcatcher is performing an action through which the spectator can learn for himself. The spectator is simply provided with an opportunity to learn. However, the Birdcatcher does not strictly imply such a thing as inadvertent or inanimate teaching⁴⁰¹ for there is intention on the part of the birdcatcher. The intention which the birdcatcher exhibits is in fact to teach, but this act of teaching has no further intention than for the spectator to observe the act for himself and understand it on his own. Teaching in the sense forwarded by the Birdcatcher example simply requires that one act with the intention that a spectator may have the opportunity to learn for themselves.

0579 It is with this sense of ostensive teaching in mind that Augustine introduces the fact that God shows everything to humans. That is to say, the material world is presented in such a way that humans have the information available to them with which to learn, presumably about the true reality of the blessed life (cf. *beata* v. 1).

Aug. ...iam enim ex his non unum aliquid aut alterum, sed milia rerum animo occurrunt, quae nullo signo dato per se ipsa monstrentur... solem certe istum lucemque haec omnia perfundentem atque uestientem, lunam et cetera sidera, terras et maria quaeque in his innumerabiliter gignuntur, nonne per se ipsa exhibet atque ostendit deus et natura cernentibus?

(32)

⁴⁰¹ As proposed by Burnyeat: 1987, 15.

All things which are learned, observed, by humans are shown by God and, through God, by nature itself. This reveals a view whereby humans receive knowledge of the world through perception which supplies the information while intelligence is then applied so as to comprehend it. Yet, it is clear that everything is purposively shown by God and so is shown so as to teach and that there is intention behind all things which one observes and attempts to understand.

8. Things and Signs.

8.1. Nothing is Learned through Signs.

0580 There are apparently two conclusions, central to the theme of knowledge acquisition, which have been arrived at by this point in the dialogue: some teaching is possible through words, or signs; and some people can be taught some things without signs.

0581 In keeping with a discussion on the shifting and ambiguous nature of language, and on the difficulty of determining the means of firmly grasping items of knowledge, the argument proceeds to turn the first of these conclusions on its head, and then the second. Augustine turns first to the proposal that some teaching is possible through words or signs.

0582 The process of applying doubt and questioning to the conclusions reached thus far in the dialogue is continued with the positing that rather than signs having the purpose of teaching, they actually teach nothing. Augustine suggests that nothing can be learned by means of signs.

Aug. ... quod si diligentius consideremus, fortasse nihil inuenies, quod per sua signa discatur.

(33)

8.1.1. The Paradox of Enquiry.

0583 The Paradox of Enquiry (Plato, *Meno* 80d-e), which, as discussed above (0013-0019), is the implicit issue at the heart of the DM, is finally introduced into the discussion. The fact that knowledge is possible (the thesis of the *contra Academicos*)

demands an explanation as to how this is possible, which in turn requires a solution to the Paradox. The introduction of the Paradox does not initially focus upon the wider implications concerning the acquisition of knowledge *per se* (these wider implications are briefly discussed above, 0534-0542, and involve the question as to how any item whatsoever is known), but uses a form of the Paradox to dismiss the thesis that anything is learned through words or signs.

Aug. ...cum enim mihi signum datur, si nescientem me inuenit, cuius rei signum sit, docere me nihil potest, si uero scientem, quid disco per signum?
(33)

This follows the basic form of the Paradox argument as seen in Plato.

MEN. καὶ τίνα τρόπον ζητήσεις, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτο, ὃ μὴ οἶσθα τὸ παράπαν ὃ τι ἔστι; ποῖον γὰρ ὧν οὐκ οἶσθα προθέμενος ζητήσεις; ἢ εἰ καὶ ὃ τι μάλιστα ἐντύχοις αὐτῷ, πῶς εἴσει ὅτι τοῦτό ἐστιν, ὃ σὺ οὐκ ᾔδησθα;
ΣΩ. μανθάνω οἷον βούλει λέγειν, ὦ Μένων. ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις, ὡς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστι ζητεῖν ἄνθρωπον οὔτε ὃ οἶδεν οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γε ὃ οἶδε ζητοῖ· οἶδε γὰρ, καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιοῦτῳ ζητήσεως· οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν· οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὃ τι ζητήσει.
(Plato, *Meno* 80d-e)

The form of this argument is as follows.

1. Every item is either known or unknown
2. If the item is known, then it cannot be learned (to learn is to get to know what is not known)
3. If the item is unknown, then it cannot be learned (for to learn one must be able to determine how to search for the item under investigation, and how is this possible when one does not know what one is attempting to learn; and, even if the item were encountered, one would be unable to recognise it as the item under enquiry)
4. Therefore, whether the item is known or unknown, it cannot be learned

0584 In Augustine's use of the argument the fundamental question as to the status of items known ("*cuius rei signum sit... scientem*") or unknown ("*nescientem... cuius rei signum sit*") is, at present, passed over. Augustine is primarily concerned at this

point to demonstrate that, whether something is known or unknown, a sign does not perform the function of teaching. The argument, as presented by Augustine, is as follows.

1. Whatever a sign signifies is either known or not known
2. If the sign signifies something known then nothing is learned through the sign because the item it proposes to teach is already known
3. If the sign signifies something unknown then it cannot teach anything, because one would not know what it is that the sign signifies
4. Therefore, whether the item signified is known or unknown, the sign teaches nothing

This argument may be analysed as follows.

1. y signifies x
2. x is either known or unknown
3. If x is known, y does not teach x (for x is already known⁴⁰²)
4. If x is unknown, y does not teach x (or it is unknown what x is and, therefore, is unknown that y signifies x ⁴⁰³)
5. Therefore, whether x is known or unknown, y teaches nothing about x

0585 Augustine's argument assumes two related facts: namely, that x can be known (and therefore, presumably, learned), although it is not explained how; and that y can be known (and therefore, presumably, learned), which again is not explained how.

The reason that these assumptions are not considered at present is on account of a, preliminary, answer having been forwarded in the Birdcatcher example. Both objects and words are learned in a manner analogous to the way birdcatching is learned⁴⁰⁴.

0586 The point which is stressed in the argument introduced by Augustine is that, given that x and y can be known, y cannot be shown to make x known. That is to say,

⁴⁰² This point relies on the given that to learn something is to get to know what was not previously known (as stated in stage 2 of the analysis of the Platonic argument: v. *sup.* 0584).

⁴⁰³ This point will be discussed below (§ 8.1.2).

one object, or item, cannot make another object, or item, known. A sign is an item, *res* (v. *sup.* 0075-0077), which functions so as to bring something into someone's mind. This suggests that all signs are unable to teach something else. That is to say, if x is a sign of y , then x is by definition (cf. Augustine's various definitions of signs, 0095) not y ⁴⁰⁵.

0587 If the basis of semiotics is the bringing of something into someone else's mind and if this bringing of something into someone else's mind is teaching, and if teaching is making something which was previously unknown, known, then there is a fundamental problem at the core of the semiotic transfer of information⁴⁰⁶.

8.1.2. Sarabarae.

0588 The questions raised, by the application of the Paradox to the thesis that nothing is learned through signs, are introduced with reference to the term '*sarabarae*'⁴⁰⁷. For when one hears (or reads) the term '*sarabarae*', which, it is

⁴⁰⁴ The question as to the validity of the Birdcatcher as a solution to the Paradox will be considered in due course (§ 9).

⁴⁰⁵ Autonymous, and self-signifying, signs appear to create a problem both for Augustine's definition of signs as showing something beyond themselves and for the treatment of the Paradox in this passage. Concerning the issue over Augustine's definitions, it should be said that the most basic and fundamental definition (DDC 1.2) simply states that signs signify something and it may simply be that signs which signify something beyond themselves are a subspecies of this more general definition. Although a subspecies, such signs are by far the largest group of signs and are therefore those most commonly discussed. With regard to autonymous, and self-signifying, signs they are, whether known or unknown, self-describing items and so cannot be said to teach themselves. Speech, as suggested by Augustine (DM 30; 0555) is an unusual case, and just as it cannot show itself without signifying, it would appear that it could not signify without showing itself.

⁴⁰⁶ The central issues of this problem concern the nature of teaching (and the concept of 'recollection' as understood by Augustine) and the nature of knowledge acquisition. Both of these issues will be considered in due course (§ 8.1.5 and § 9). It should also be noted that it is likely that Augustine was aware of the Paradox as applied to the linguistic/semiotic mode via the sceptical tradition, cf. Sextus Empiricus *PH* 2.266-273.

⁴⁰⁷ '*Sarabarae*' (Daniel 3:27, Septuagint; 3:94, Vulgate. The vulgate has '*saraballa*'.) is a particularly well chosen word for an unfamiliar term is required to make the point in the following argument. The meaning of this term is extremely obscure (*RE*: 1920, 2.R.1 col. 2386 s.v. *saraballa*) and Augustine himself may have mistranslated the word ("*capitum tegmina*" rather than 'wide trousers' as from the Persian, in L-S: 1989, V.3 col. 1630 s.v. *sarabara*). Whether Augustine has intentionally or, as is perhaps more likely due to his choice of what must have been a very rare word, unintentionally

assumed, is an unfamiliar word, the word itself does not show the thing which it signifies. If a sort of head covering is named by this term, this has not made it apparent to the listener (or reader) what a head, or what coverings, are. The listener already has a conception of what these terms mean and did not gain such concepts from their being named by another⁴⁰⁸. One knows what a head is, or what coverings are, on account of the prior experience of having seen the things signified by them. It is this prior perceptual experience which has formed the concept of the thing and it is this concept which allows one to understand the word uttered when saying 'head', for example.

Aug. ... non enim mihi rem, quam significat, ostendit uerbum, cum lego «et sarabarae eorum non sunt commutatae». nam si quaedam capitum tegmina nuncupantur hoc nomine, num ego hoc audito aut quid sit caput aut quid sint tegmina didici? ante ista noueram, neque cum appellarentur ab aliis, sed cum a me uiderentur, eorum est mihi facta notitia.
(33)

0589 This is to say,

1. 'sarabara' signifies head-covering-*x*
2. head-covering-*x* is either known or unknown
3. If head-covering-*x* is known, 'sarabara' does not teach head-covering-*x* (for head-covering-*x* is already known, that is, one has a concept (*notitia*) of it)
4. If head-covering-*x* is unknown, 'sarabara' does not teach head-covering-*x* (for it is unknown what head-covering-*x* is and, therefore, is unknown that 'sarabara' signifies head-covering-*x*)
5. Therefore, whether head-covering-*x* is known or unknown, 'sarabara' teaches nothing (of head-covering-*x*)

mistranslated the word, the point that one must know what a word applies to is prior to knowing the word, as sign, is enforced by his example. It is, however, by no means certain that Augustine's slip is not intentional for he, perhaps significantly, only goes as far as to say: "*nam si quaedam capitum tegmina nuncupantur hoc nomine...*" (DM 33). It is plausible that Augustine has picked an unfamiliar word to Adeodatus, and his readers, and, by saying '*nam si...*', enforces the fact for Adeodatus that he is unaware if this is what the term means; and further, it is not what the term means. It may also be significant that this passage leads into one which raises the question of authority, and reliable testimony.

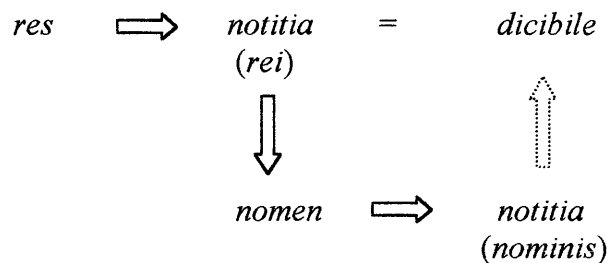
⁴⁰⁸ "[For Augustine]... speaking in sets of signs about the world, expressing our thoughts about the world, is a way of 'informing' someone else about the world, a passing on of our own thoughts and experiences *at second hand*" (Rist: 1994, 30).

0590 The process which can be seen from this passage is that one perceives an object (*ista [res]... a me uiderentur*) and in this way one gains a concept of this object (*eorum est mihi facta notitia*), and then one is told the name applied to the object and so gains an understanding of the name (*v. sup. § 6.2.5.1*) and correlates name to signification, which is the concept in sayable form (*v. sup. § 5.1.2.2.5.6*).

0591 The meaning of a word is, therefore, only learned when one already has the mental content so as to correlate word and thing. Knowledge of things would then appear to be prior to knowledge of signs.

0592 The diagram representing the causal schema, initially presented above (D28, 0531), from object to linguistically expressible meaning, may now be more fully developed.

(D30)



In this diagram the object (*res*) causes the concept in the mind (*rei notitia*), the (potentially) linguistically accessible aspect of this concept is the ‘sayable’ (*dicibile*). The name (*nomen*) exists on account of the concept of which it is the sign, and the uttered sound, which is the name, causes the concept of the name (*nominis notitia*) or the name uttered within (*v. sup. 0043, DM 2*). This concept of the name is that which is correlated with the sayable aspect of thought and enables the potential, linguistic item, which is the meaningful utterance, to be realised.

8.1.3. Language Acquisition.

0593 On hearing any word, a word simply *qua* sound, such as the two syllable ‘*caput*’ (‘head’), one is ignorant as to what this sound [ca-put] signifies. Every word is, when first encountered, unknown and unfamiliar, like ‘*sarabarae*’. With the constant repetition of the word, ‘*caput*’, the listener makes a note of, and observes when, it is said, and in this way comes to realise that it signifies something already familiar to her by sight.

Aug. ... etenim cum primum istae duae syllabae, cum dicimus caput, aures meas impulerunt, tam nesciui quid significarent, quam cum primo audirem legeremue sarabaras. sed cum saepe diceretur caput, notans atque animaduertens, quando diceretur, repperi uocabulum esse rei, quae mihi iam erat uidendo notissima.

(33)

0594 Before the connection between sound and signification had been made, the word was simply a sound and was only learned to be a sign when it was realised what it was a sign of. The item, which the word is a sign of, is learned by seeing it, not by any act of signifying. In this way the sign is learned when the thing is understood, or recognised, rather than being learned through the sign being given.

quod priusquam repperissem, tantum mihi sonus erat hoc uerbum; signum uero esse didici, quando cuius rei signum esset inueni, quam quidem ut dixi non significatu, sed aspectu didiceram. ita magis signum re cognita quam signo dato ipsa res discitur.

(33)

0595 The primary focus of this passage is to clarify the fact that things which are known give meaning to signs rather than signs making these things known. However, there are striking parallels also in this passage with Augustine’s theory of language acquisition as presented, briefly, in the *Confessiones* (1.13).

0596 The discussion of language acquisition in the *Confessiones* is sophisticated, but is also rather condensed and therefore unclear. Much of the background implicit in

the *Confessiones* discussion requires an awareness of the treatment of knowledge acquisition and of the relation of word, meaning, and reality in the DM. It is, perhaps, due to a lack of familiarity with the DM⁴⁰⁹ that Wittgenstein famously described Augustine's picture of language acquisition as "... the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already *think*, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself" (*PI* § 32).

0597 Augustine rather presents a picture where there is a continuum between the items in the world and the human mind, which is of course also in this world, and this continuum is formal. Items are such as to be visible (*uisibilia*; DM 8), audible (*audibilia*; DM 8), and generally sensible (*sensibilia*; DM 39), but more significantly they are also such as to be intelligible (*intelligibilia*; DM 8, DM 39), sayable (*dicibilia*; DD 5.60), and signifiable (*significibilia*; DM 8)⁴¹⁰. The human mind is of such a nature as to understand these items (which are formal; v. *sup.* § 5.1.2.2.5.6) and think of them propositionally. To such an extent, when a child is of an age to be able to attempt to express its will that it does, in a sense, "talk to itself". However, this 'talk' is simply a way of saying that the child has intentions and desires and, due to the nature of the human mind, that these are capable of being accessed semiotically and linguistically.

⁴⁰⁹ It seems implausible that Wittgenstein was aware of the DM as he proceeds from his criticism of Augustine's view of language acquisition to discuss problems with Augustine's approach, as he understood it, by means of ostensive definition. The problems introduced are rather similar to those discussed by Augustine in the DM by means of ostensive definition also. This is not to say that Augustine proceeds to solve the central problem posed by Wittgenstein but rather that he goes further towards an analysis of the problem than Wittgenstein's presentation gives credit for.

⁴¹⁰ The lack of the term '*dicibilia*' in the DM is related to the focus of the text upon a predominantly semiotic analysis of language (hence the concern with *significibilia*). '*Dicibilia*' occurs in the *de dialectica* where the focus is specifically on language in its logical aspect. The only other occurrence of '*dicibilia*' is in a sermon (*s.* 188.2) where the contrast is made between something in its sayable aspect (*dicibilis*) and in its visible aspect (*visibilis*).

0598 Sentences are not simply made up of strings of words but rather are made up of independently meaningful semiotic, and linguistic, units. These units do not all name things in some referential manner, as a term like ‘chair’ may be understood to do, but many (such as ‘*si*’, ‘*ex*’, etc.) are only truly meaningful within the context of the proposition, within which they perform a function which is reflective of an aspect of the state of affairs⁴¹¹ to which the proposition is a conceptual, or semantic, counterpart. The external state of affairs is intelligible due to its rational form, and can therefore be expressed in an articulate, linguistic manner. The description of deep structure thought as a inner word (cf. *trin.* 15.24) is to describe the intelligible and propositionally available nature of the item understood. The child Augustine describes does not already have a language, but would be better described as having the potential to semiotically correlate discrete items, such as word and item, and, also, of having the potential to linguistically access items stored memorially. These stored items are formal and are able to be accessed propositionally and are, therefore, sayable.

0599 The picture of language acquisition as revealed in DM 33 (and *conf.* 1.13) is primarily concerned with words which directly relate to physical objects, such as, *this* head here and now, which can be ostensively shown. In this approach Augustine is not, as suggested above, concerned to present all language learning as following this model but rather is forwarding a thesis whereby children begin by observing material objects and by hearing material sounds uttered by material adults, and by perceiving both the objects and the sounds uttered the child can correlate, for itself, sound and object. Learning begins in this concrete way and builds upon this basis⁴¹².

⁴¹¹ Or with terms like ‘if’ or ‘because’, etc., they may reflect an aspect of the speaker’s relation, with respect to intention, state of mind, etc., to a specific state of affairs.

⁴¹² Cf. Quine defends ostension as a means of establishing core terms upon which more complex, and abstract, ones can be built (Quine: 1950, 631).

0600 Important to this is that Augustine closely relates memory, and its function as the store of concepts (*conf.* 10.22), to language acquisition. In early childhood Augustine notes how the child slowly begins to become aware (*paulatim sentiebam*) and that before this there is no available memory (*nam ista mea non memini*). With a growing awareness, which is a growing conception of one's surroundings and the world in general (*ubi essem*), there is a desire to demonstrate one's will (*uoluntates meas uolebam ostendere*). The demonstration of the will is attempted through signifying (*signa*) which initially involves similarity and resemblance of the items sought (*similia*).

post et ridere coepi, dormiens primo, deinde uigilans. hoc enim de me mihi indicatum est et credidi, quoniam sic uidemus alios infantes; nam ista mea non memini. et ecce paulatim sentiebam, ubi essem, et uoluntates meas uolebam ostendere eis, per quos implerentur, et non poteram, quia illae intus erant, foris autem illi, nec ullo suo sensu ualebant introire in animam meam. itaque iactabam membra et uoces, signa similia uoluntatibus meis, pauca quae poteram, qualia poteram: non enim erant ueresimilia
(*conf.* 1.8)

The picture here is one which also supports the thesis that the early development of human language depended on the resemblance between word and object (DD 6). The beginning of semiotic awareness, and therefore the beginning of a movement towards language acquisition, depends upon a recognition of resemblance between things and an attempt to imitate things so that one's will might be understood by others.

0601 The first stage of his life which Augustine remembers falls within the period within which he could talk.

nonne ab infantia huc pergens ueni in pueritiam? uel potius ipsa in me uenit et successit infantiae? nec discessit illa: quo enim abiit? et tamen iam non erat. non enim eram infans, qui non farer, sed iam puer loquens eram. et memini hoc...
(*conf.* 1.13)

Memory, or the facilitation of its use and the enforcing of it, is closely connected to language for Augustine. Boyhood is the first stage of his life able to be certified by

memory, before this moment he relied on testimony from his parents and inferences due to his later observances of babies. At the earlier stage of his development, when Augustine was an infant (*'infantia'* meaning, literally, unable to talk), he could not talk and so could neither access nor properly entrench his memories: with language come these abilities and so one has a memory of the stage of life following on from language acquisition. This factor would support the close correlation for Augustine of language and concept formation. However, concept formation should not therefore be understood as linguistic but rather that concepts are such as to be linguistically available. When these concepts are correlated with a semiotic equivalent, such as a word, they can be accessed with ease and entrenched in the memory through repetition and recall⁴¹³. The image of writing is used by Augustine as a picture of the articulated, linguistic, embedding of memoristic events and of repeated over-writing to fix the concept.

haec autem disciplina ipsa dei lex est, quae apud eum fixa et inconcussa semper manens in sapientes animas quasi transcribitur, ut tanto se sciant uiuere melius tantoque sublimius, quanto et perfectius eam contemplantur intellegendo et uiuendo custodiunt diligentius.

(ord. 2.25)

0602 Augustine seems to suggest that one learns a language in its entirety from scratch, with only the tools of intelligence, desire, and memory. This would accord with the picture of learning as presented in the Birdcatcher. However, all of the tools mentioned above are further facilitated by the development of practical linguistic abilities. That is, the concepts which one has acquired are formal and are therefore of such a sort as to be linguistically available, with the development of core linguistic

⁴¹³ The role of recollection in language will be discussed below (§ 8.1.5).

terms through ostension (as in the Birdcatcher model) one is able to employ these core terms so as to facilitate the development of yet more terms⁴¹⁴.

0603 Augustine directly discusses language acquisition in *Confessiones* 1.13. The picture, as given, is one whereby children learn initially through ostension. This ostension is, however, very much like that demonstrated in the Birdcatcher. Language is not taught by others (*non... docebant me maiores homines preabentes mihi uerba certo aliquo ordine*) but is acquired by means of one's intelligence (*sed ego ipse mente*) which is God given⁴¹⁵. The child attempts to express its will (*edere uellem sensa cordis mei*) by various sounds and movements (*cum gemitibus et uocibus uariis et uariis membrorum motibus*) but soon applies memory to the process (*prensabam memoria*) by noting the vocal sound which was made (*cum ipsi appellabant rem aliquam*) and the object to which the person who had uttered the sound moved (*cum secundum eam uocem corpus ad aliquid mouebant*). As in the Birdcatcher the birdcatcher does not intend to show how the equipment is used but simply by using it he facilitates the spectator's learning. The spectator applies his intelligence to the process and understands how the equipment, or verbal tools, are used. The correlation between sound and thing is observed and stored in the memory (*uidebam et tenebam hoc ab eis uocari rem illam*). The child gains extra clues from what Augustine describes as the natural vocabulary of all races (*tamquam uerbis naturalibus omnium gentium*), that is the gestures of the face and body, and the tone of the voice, to express whether one intends to seek and possess or to reject and avoid (*indicante*

⁴¹⁴ There does of course remain the central difficulty as raised by Wittgenstein, namely, that the child's ability to master such core concepts is presupposed and this presupposition is ultimately based upon the formal basis for concept formation and for language acquisition in Augustine's approach to epistemology. Wittgenstein seeks an answer to how concepts and meanings are determined, and this answer is not to be satisfied by assuming that these are determined by the way the world is, i.e. formal. For further discussion of this central difficulty in Augustine's approach v. *inf.* § 9.

⁴¹⁵ Augustine cites the divine presence as an explanation for the learning of language - "I conclude...that for the author of *conf.* 1.13 its central focus is on God's responsibility for the mind teaching itself" (Burnyeat: 1987, 4).

affectionem animi in petendis, habendis, reiciendis fugiendisue rebus). It is not exactly clear what Augustine means by this, and how he strictly understands these indicators as being natural. However, he defines them as very simple and general actions, such as appetite and rejection. These natural indicators are presumably ones such as are learned by experience, such as motion from denoting rejection and motion towards denoting appetite. These actions are very basic, and fundamental, for one must learn at an early stage in life that things sought are moved towards, such as food, while those rejected are moved away from, as one reacts to pain, such as when burned by a flame.

0604 In such a way words are gradually understood (*ita verba... paulatim conligebam*) and through frequently hearing (*crebro audita quarum rerum signa essent*) of different words in different contexts (*in uariis sentiis locis suis posita*) the child begins, through vocal training (*edomito in eis signis ore*)⁴¹⁶, to articulate his desires (*measque iam uoluntates... enuntiabam*). In such a way, through interaction with, and observation of, one's parents (*pendens ex parentum auctoritate nutuque maiorum hominum*) does one become a fully sociable being (*uitae humanae procellosam societatem altius ingressus sum*).

... unde loqui didiceram, post aduerti. non enim docebant me maiores homines praebentes mihi uerba certo aliquo ordine doctrinae sicut paulo post litteras, sed ego ipse mente, quam dedisti mihi, deus meus, cum gemitibus et uocibus uariis et uariis membrorum motibus edere uellem sensa cordis mei, ut uoluntati pareretur, nec ualerem quae uolebam omnia nec quibus uolebam omnibus. prensabam memoria, cum ipsi appellabant rem aliquam et cum secundum eam uocem corpus ad aliquid mouebant, uidebam, et tenebam hoc ab eis uocari rem illam, quod sonabant, cum eam uellent ostendere. hoc autem eos uelle ex motu corporis aperiebatur tamquam uerbis naturalibus omnium gentium, quae fiunt uultu et nutu oculorum ceteroque membrorum actu et sonitu uocis indicante affectionem animi in petendis, habendis, reiciendis fugiendisue rebus. ita uerba in uariis sentiis locis suis posita et crebro audita quarum rerum signa essent paulatim conligebam measque iam uoluntates edomito in eis signis ore per haec enuntiabam. sic cum his, inter

⁴¹⁶ It is notable that Augustine also considers that the sound system of a language is learned.

quos eram, uoluntatum enuntiandarum signa communicavi et uitae humanae procellosam societatem altius ingressus sum pendens ex parentum auctoritate nutuque maiorum hominum.

(*conf.* 1.13)⁴¹⁷

0605 When compared with the discussion of ‘*caput*’ (DM 33) there is clearly a coherent view of language learning. There are a number of parallels which it will be useful to specify. Most important to the general thesis of the DM is the fact that words are learned in what is an inductive manner: “... *cum saepe dicerentur caput*” (DM 33) and “... *uerba... crebro audita quarum rerum signa essent paulatim conligebam*”. Also, when one hears a word used one notes and observes (“... *notans atque animaduertens*”, DM 33; “... *uidebam et tenebam*” *conf.* 1.13) what it signifies (“... *quando diceretur, repperi uocabulum esse rei*” DM 33; “... *hoc... uocari rem illam*” and “... *uerba... crebro audita quarum rerum signa essent*” *conf.* 1.13). The learning of language, therefore, can be seen to depend upon one’s existing concepts which are inductively correlated, through observation and storage in the memory, with sounds which become the signs of the objects previously stored in the mind as concepts.

0606 A parallel which may be drawn with Augustine’s thesis of language acquisition is that of his approach to the differences in learning a first or second language.

... uidelicet difficultas, difficultas omnino ediscendae linguae peregrinae, quasi felle aspergebat omnes suauitates Graecas fabulosarum narrationum. nulla enim uerba illa noueram et saeuis terroribus ac poenis, ut nossem, instabatur mihi uehementer. nam et Latina aliquando infans utique nulla noueram et tamen aduertendo didici sine ullo metu atque cruciatu inter etiam blandimenta nutricum et ioca adridentium et laetitias alludentium. didici uero illa sine poenali onere urgentium, cum me urgeret cor meum ad parienda concepta sua, et qua non esset, nisi aliqua uerba didicissem non a docentibus, sed a loquentibus, in quorum et ego auribus parturiebam quidquid sentiebam. hinc

⁴¹⁷ In this passage Augustine emphasises the phonetic (*edomito in eis signis ore*), syntactic (*uerba in uariis sentiis locis suis posita*), and semantic (*uerba...audita quarum rerum signa essent...conligebam*) aspects of language learning.

satis elucet maiorem habere vim ad discenda ista liberam curiositatem quam meticulosam necessitatem.

(*conf.* 1.23)

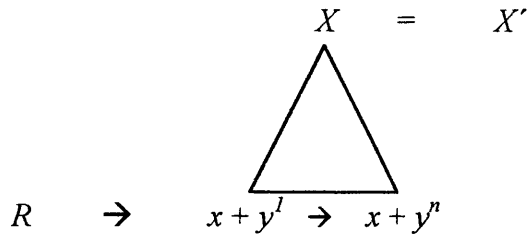
A great difference is observed in the ‘teaching’ method, for Greek Augustine was terrorised and beaten while for his native Latin he learned of his own accord and without compulsion. The distinction is basically one of being unwilling and forced and of being willing and actively involved in choosing to learn (*aduertendo didici*). The drive to learn comes not from others but from one’s own heart and the desire to bring forth one’s own thoughts (*concepta*). As a child one learns words not from other’s teaching but from observing other’s talking and from the desire to share one’s thoughts with others. There is a certain degree of healthy curiosity rather than studied necessity.

0607 The model for the system of semiotic relations as described for the smoke-fire correlation (*v. sup.* 0138, D5) can be seen to be applicable to Augustine’s approach to language acquisition, as presented in DM 33 and *conf.* 1.13. The model for the smoke-fire correlation was also a model of induction. This model describes how the correlation occurs between the concept of a thing and the concept of a name as seen in diagram D30 (*v. sup.* 0592). In diagram D30 the picture describes the causal relations between object and concept (of object), concept (of object) and name, name and concept (of name). The correlation of name and concept (of name) to concept (of object) is determined in the above presentation of language acquisition and is described as follows.

0608 An individual, *R* (receiver), has a concept of an object, *x*, and hears the name, *y*, used to signify *x* and it is ostensively defined to *R* that *y* signifies *x*. Therefore, on seeing *x*, *R* is ostensively shown *x* while *y* is said, and in this way *R* correlates *y* with concept *X* (which has been formed through numerous previous sightings of samples of

x). Therefore, the meaning, which is the sayable correlate of X , of y is understood by R to be X' .

(D31)



0609 The difficulty with this description of language acquisition is that precisely as the Birdcatcher example specifies as a solution to the problem of ostension, namely that there must be a level of interpretation, or application of intelligence, for such a model to constitute sure knowledge of the fact, for R , that the meaning of y is *specifically* X' . The process is inductive and, therefore, on each occasion of hearing the term y applied to an example of x , R gains a better idea of what specifically is the meaning of the term, which is to say, R gains a better idea of *how* y is being used by ostender¹ to ostenderⁿ. As is clear, this approach may provide a better understanding with each act of ostension (or use of the term in daily usage) but, although this may constitute knowledge as commonly understood, this it would appear is not the precise type of sure and well-grounded knowledge Augustine is seeking.

0610 The place of interpretation in this process is crucial and would suggest a problem with Augustine's use of the Birdcatcher as a valid model for gaining the sort of knowledge sought. This problem is, on this level, essentially social for if it is given that R has validly learned, by means of the Birdcatcher approach, concept X and so has knowledge of what essentially constitutes an example of x , then the problem is one of communication. This is to say, although R knows x she does not know that when another member of her linguistic community uses the term y that this term also

has the specific meaning X' , y may mean X'' for someone else and as has been shown in Augustine's discussion of ostension, it is difficult to know exactly what a term signifies unless one introduces some level of interpretation. However, this interpretation is essentially the problem for one continually encounters the question as to whether the interpretation is accurate and if so, how is this accuracy achieved. These questions will be considered in the following discussion, for as will be seen, Augustine faces a more central problem concerning this issue, and that is the question as to how R can even be said to firmly know that X is essentially what makes all members of x , x (*v. inf.* § 9.2). At present, however, it would appear that Augustine is burdened with a theory of language acquisition which is founded on induction and which does, therefore, not constitute a means of accurate transferral of information, in any strict sense. Augustine is acutely aware of this fact, however, although the inherent difficulty within his thesis is highlighted by his raising of the Paradox, he will, in due course, confront the central issue concerning the Paradox and knowledge acquisition which will bring to the fore the problems in his thesis on language acquisition, and how it reflects upon the question of the suitability of language to teach.

8.1.4. Pointing.

0611 At present Augustine is concerned with emphasising that words, and signs, depend upon a prior concept, or knowledge, of the thing which is signified by the word. When one hears the word 'head' for the first time, one is unaware as to whether the sound is simply a sound or is a significant sound. In this situation what is sought is a concept of the sign, not of the thing which is signified. One may then have

knowledge of a sound but to have knowledge of a sign one must know what it is a sign of.

Aug. ... finge nos nunc primum audire quod dicitur caput, et nescientes, utrum uox ista sit tantummodo sonans an aliquid etiam significans, quaerere, quid sit caput - memento nos non rei, quae significatur, sed ipsius signi uelle habere notitiam, qua caremus profecto, quamdiu cuius signum est ignoramus...
(34)

The knowledge of the sign comes through an appreciation of the correlation of sound, and knowledge of sound, to object, and knowledge of object. This correlation is achieved through ostensive definition.

Aug. ...si ergo ita quaerentibus res ipsa digito demonstratur, hac conspecta discimus signum, quod audieramus tantum, nondum noueramus.
(34)

0612 The two elements in the sign, sound and signification, are central to this process. The sound is simply perceived through its striking the ear, while the signification is only grasped by seeing the object which the sign signifies.

Aug. ...in quo tamen signo cum duo sint, sonus et significatio, sonum certe non per signum percipimus, sed eo ipso aure pulsata, significationem autem re, quae significatur, aspecta.
(34)

In this way, a sound which strikes the ear becomes a sign through one's grasping that the sound is correlated to the object ostensively defined. Thus, the concept of the object becomes the signification of the sound and the sound becomes a sign.

0613 Therefore, an encounter with an object leads to a concept of an object:

(1) object → concept of object.

An encounter with a sound leads to a concept of a sound:

(2) sound → concept of sound.

The ostensive definition leads to a correlation of sound and object:

(3) sound = object.

This correlation is essentially a correlation of the concepts of object and sound:

(4) concept of sound = concept of object.

This correlation marks the concept of the object as a signification of the sound:

(5) concept of sound = concept of object →
concept of object/signification.

The marking of the concept of the object as a signification determines that the sound is a sign:

(6) sound/sign.

The sound is, therefore, known as a sign due to its signification. It is, in this way, a word.

uerbum... quod cum aliquo significatu articulata uoce profertur
(8)

0614 The act of pointing signifies what the finger is aimed at⁴¹⁸, it is not aimed at the sign but at the object. Therefore, the ostensive act neither shows one the object, which is already known, nor the sign, which is not pointed out.

nam illa intentio digiti significare nihil aliud potest quam illud, in quo intenditur digitus; intentus est autem non in signum, sed in membrum, quod caput uocatur. itaque per illam neque rem possum nosse, quam noueram neque signum, in quod intentus digitus non est.
(34)

0615 Augustine is using the example of pointing, as ostensive definition, for simplicity of example. The central point he desires to make is that one does not learn anything through words for the signification is understood only after one has knowledge of the object signified, one does not come to know the object by means of the signification. Learning is achieved through the '*res ipsa cognita*' not through the '*significatio*'.

0616 The act of pointing with the finger is not actually a sign of the thing signified but is rather a sign of pointing-out. It is simply another sign, similar in function to the

exclamation ‘look!’. Therefore, pointing is not free of the dilemma of showing one sign by means of another, *ad infinitum*⁴¹⁹. This said, Augustine has discussed the issues involved in this and now simply uses pointing, which must be understood together with the *caveat* concerning such signs from the preceding discussion, as a simplified way of discussing the present issue.

sed de intentione digiti non nimis curo, quia ipsius demonstrationis signum mihi uidetur potius quam rerum aliquarum, quae demonstrantur, sicut aduerbium, quod ecce dicimus; nam et cum hoc aduerbio digitum solemus intendere, ne unum demonstrandi signum non sit satis. et id maxime tibi nitor persuadere si potero, per ea signa, quae uerba appellantur, nos nihil discere; potius enim ut dixi uim uerbi, id est significationem, quae latet in sono, re ipsa, quae significatur, cognita discimus, quam illam tali significatione percipimus.

(34)

0617 The situation as described concerning ‘head’ is likewise seen in numerous other examples. In such a case as ‘*sarabarae*’, although one may know the objects (i.e. head-coverings) by sight, one does not know that they are *sarabarae*. One already has the concepts of head and covering, and therefore of head-coverings generally and can therefore recognise that what is being pointed out is an unfamiliar sort of head-covering⁴²⁰.

Aug. ...quod dixi de capite, hoc etiam de tegminibus deque aliis rebus innumerabilibus dixerim; quas tamen cum iam nouerim, sarabaras illas adhuc usque non noui...

(35)

The act of indicating, either by pointing or by using words to point, or direct, one’s attention does not teach one but one learns for oneself by looking. Learning is achieved through the act of seeing (*aspectu*) not signifying (*significatu*).

⁴¹⁸ The Quinean ‘ostended point’, cf. Quine: 1969, 39

⁴¹⁹ One response may be that pointing is a ‘natural’ sign of the sort discussed in *Confessiones* (1.13), v. *sup.* 0603, and does not fall into the regress. However, Augustine does not forward this as a possibility.

⁴²⁰ This example supports the view that one gains certain basic core terms upon which one can build. Such terms do not teach one what a particular item is but supply enough information so as to allow one to know what sort of thing to look for and so directly learn what it is for oneself.

Aug. ...quod si eis [tegminibus] forte conspectis cum simul adero me admonuerit dicens: ecce sarabarae, discam rem, quam nesciebam non per uerba, quae dicta sunt, sed per eius aspectum, per quem factum est, ut etiam nomen illud, quid ualeret, nossem ac tenerem.

(35)

0618 Although one learns through direct experience, or seeing with one's own eyes, there is also a clear place for a degree of reliance on another's words. Trust may be placed in another's words as an encouragement to direct one's attention. This directing of one's attention is the seeking what one would see by looking.

Aug. ...non enim, cum rem ipsam didici, uerbis alienis credidi, sed oculis meis; illis tamen fortasse ut adtenderem credidi, id est ut aspectu quaererem, quid uiderem.

(35)

0619 There are introduced, at this point, a number of themes which will be of importance in the following discussion (DM 38-41). DM 35, 36 and 37 are transitional in the movement of the discussion into the final major section of the dialogue, which is concerned primarily with the acquisition of knowledge and with the consideration of the efficacy of language in this acquisition, particularly in the light of the previous analyses of language and various aspects of it. The focus of the discussion has begun to shift and is signalled through an alteration of the vocabulary, and concepts, employed by Augustine. The discussion of the themes introduced at this point will be discussed in due course, and in their relevant sections, however, it will be useful to mention them at this point.

0620 The themes which are introduced are: the place of direct experience and that of sight, and seeing, in knowledge acquisition; the idea that one learns simply by looking; the place of testimony in knowledge acquisition, whether that be putting belief in the testimony of others or the placing of trust in one's own eyes, or direct experience; the usefulness of the directing of one's attention in the learning process; and finally the idea that one must seek so as to see.

8.1.5. Recollection.

0621 The most that can be said for the effect that words do have is that they remind one to look for things (*admonent ... ut quaeramus res*). They do not exhibit things that we might know them.

Aug. ...hactenus uerba ualuerunt, quibus ut plurimum tribuam, admonent tantum, ut quaeramus res, non exhibent, ut norimus. is me autem aliquid docet, qui uel oculis uel ulli corporis sensui uel ipsi etiam menti praebet ea, quae cognoscere uolo.

(36)

Teaching is the presenting of what is to be known before the eyes or other senses, or before the mind of the learner. Augustine here shows a regard for ‘epistemic categories’⁴²¹. These are such that knowledge may be of two categories of truths:

- “1. truths such that if x knows that p , then x has perceived by sense that p ;
- 2. truths such that if x knows that p , then x has perceived by the mind that p .”⁴²²

The sense in which teaching is understood has been redefined. Teaching is the presenting of the item to be known directly before the senses or before the mind of the person who is being taught.

0622 All that is taught by words is the sound of words, for those things which are not signs cannot be words. That is to say, even if one has heard a word, one does not know that it is a word until one knows what it signifies. Therefore, if one hears the word ‘*sarabarae*’ and does not know that it is a word, as one does not know what it signifies, then one merely learns the sound ‘*sar-ab-ar-ae*’⁴²³.

⁴²¹ Barnes: 1980, 193-206.

⁴²² Burnyeat: 1987, 19.

⁴²³ It is possible that Augustine is thinking here of the difference, in Stoicism, between utterance and speech, and speech and language: “διαφέρει δὲ φωνὴ καὶ λέξις, ὅτι φωνὴ μὲν καὶ ὁ ἥχος ἐστὶ, λέξις δὲ τὸ ἐναρθρον μόνον. λέξις δὲ λόγου διαφέρει, ὅτι λόγος ἀεὶ σημαντικός

Aug. ...uerbis igitur nisi uerba non discimus, immo sonitum strepitumque uerborum; nam si ea, quae signa non sunt, uerba esse non possunt, quamuis iam auditum uerbum nescio tamen uerbum esse, donec quid significet sciam.
(36)

The complete understanding of words is only realised with the knowledge of the things which they signify. Words consist of two elements, sound (*sonus*) and signification (*significatio*), and only with knowledge of both can one be said to know a word.

Aug. ...rebus ergo cognitis uerborum quoque cognitio perficitur; uerbis uero auditis nec uerba discuntur; non enim ea uerba, quae nouimus, discimus aut quae non nouimus didicisse nos possumus confiteri, nisi eorum significatione percepta, quae non auditione uocum emissarum, sed rerum significatarum cognitione contingit.
(36)

Augustine, in this passage, again returns to a form of the Paradox to stress his point that words do not even teach one about words. When one hears a word which is known to one, one cannot learn it (for one already knows it), and when one hears a word one does not know one cannot learn it by means of the sound uttered, unless one knows the signification. The signification is not learned through hearing the sound uttered but through one's conception of the thing signified. Therefore, words do not even teach one about words.

0623 When words are spoken one either knows what they signify or one does not. If one knows, then one is reminded rather than learns, and if one does not then one is not even reminded, unless one is reminded that one should enquire.

Aug. ...uerissima quippe ratio est et uerissime dicitur, cum uerba proferuntur, aut scire nos quid significant aut nescire; si scimus commemorari potius quam discere, si autem nescimus nec commemorari quidem, sed fortasse ad quaerendum admoneri.
(36)

ἐστι, λέξις δὲ καὶ ἀσήμαντος, ὥς ἡ βλίτυρι, λόγος δὲ οὐδαμῶς." (Diogenes Laertius 7.57). The fact that a 'word' without significance can actually be learned would appear to be that it is articulated (as the meaningless term 'βλίτυρι'), however, without significance it cannot be learned as a word proper.

0624 There are two related applications of recollection as presented in DM 36.

Firstly, there is recollection where words serve to remind one of what they signify

(“... *uerba... aut scire nos quid significant aut nescire; si scimus commemorari...*”),

and, secondly, there is recollection where words remind one so as to look for what one

does not know (“... *quid significant... si... nescimus... ad quaerendum admoneri...*”;

“... *admonent ut quaeramus res ut norimus...*” DM 36).

0625 In the first application words function so as to recall, from their latency in

memory, concepts of the items signified to the mind of the sign receiver. One has a

concept of an item and has a concept of a word which is correlated with this item; on

hearing this word uttered the mind thinks of the word and so is reminded of the

signification, which is to say one accesses the latent concept of the item signified,

from the memory and into one’s consciously thinking mind.

Aug. sic quoque locutione nihil aliud agere quam commemorare, cum memoria, cui uerba inhaerent, ea reuoluendo facit uenire in mentem res ipsas, quarum signa sunt uerba.

(2)

One can, therefore, be prompted by another, through his saying a word, to recall a

concept to mind. This is properly described as reminding (v. *sup.* 0029). However, as

in DM 2 (above), one may silently think of a word and so remind oneself, that is,

access a latent memory item. This form of recollection is properly described as recall

(v. *sup.* 0030).

0626 The second application of recollection is that whereby one is prompted by

another’s word to look for what one does not know. So, as in DM 36, which refers

back to examples such as “*ecce: sarabarae!*” (DM 35), the words are a prompt to the

listener to look for that which he does not know, namely *sarabarae*. Calling this

‘reminding’ may seem a rather unusual use of the term, however, the act of looking is

entirely dependent upon the will of the sign receiver and the words of the sign

transmitter simply remind, or recall to the memory of, the receiver that he does not know *sarabarae* and reminds him of the desire to know (or not to know, in which case he will not respond by looking).

0627 Both of the above applications of recollection are related in that words serve to access from the memory latent concepts, or knowledge, into the mind of the sign receiver.

9. Knowledge.

9.1. Testimony.

0628 Augustine's thesis, as so presented, is that no word teaches anyone what it signifies. No word, taken singly, can show one what it is that it signifies unless one already knows what the word signifies.

0629 In the '*sarabarae*' example, not only does the individual word '*sarabara*' not teach anything but neither does the sentence '*sarabarae quaedam capitum tegmina sunt*', even when all of the other words are known and perfectly familiar to the listener. As stated above (0625-0626), such words as are known merely serve to prompt or direct the listener to look so as to learn, for herself, what it is that the unknown word, '*sarabarae*', means. This is essentially the problem at the heart of the regress which occurs when words are defined by words (DM 4; v. *sup.* § 3.5 - 3.5.1), and goes some way to supporting the view that this also is Augustine's reason for disregarding definitions as a possible solution to determining word meaning (DM 43): the word '*sarabara*' cannot teach its meaning to one who does not know what it means, neither can any other word, and neither indeed can any combination of words.

0630 The two forms of teaching discussed in the DM, namely, telling and showing, are therefore seen to be remarkably similar in that they simply serve to encourage, or encourage by reminding, the listener to look and, therefore, learn for herself.

0631 The question of the knowledge of word meaning raises the related issue that if knowledge is not learned through words, then what of narrative, and more particularly, what of historical narrative. Augustine considers a section of narrative from the Book of Daniel (Dan. 3), thereby expanding the discussion from a particular

term ('*sarabarae*') from the narrative (Dan. 3:94, Vulgate; 3:27, Septuagint) to the narrative itself.

0632 The issue is such that if one cannot know the items denoted by a term other than by direct experience nor can know the meaning of the term without this prior direct experience of the referent, then there would appear to be a problem with all historical narrative, and, in fact, with all narrative. Nevertheless, it is clear that such narrative is accepted, as, for Christians, in the case of the story of the three youths saved from Nebuchadnezzar's punishment by their faith and religious devotion (Dan. 3). In such examples it would appear that one does indeed learn, at least in a sense, from the words.

Aug. ...quod si dixeris tegmina quidem illa capitum, quorum nomen sono tantum tenemus, non nos posse nisi uisa cognoscere, neque nomen ipsum plenius nisi illis cognitis nosse quod tamen de ipsis pueris accepimus, ut regem ac flammam fide ac religione superauerint, quas laudes deo cecinerint, quos honores ab ipso etiam inimico meruerint, num aliter haec nisi per uerba didicimus?

(37)

0633 The response to this objection is that all of the words from the narrative were in fact already known to the hearer (or reader), that is to say, the hearer already had a concept ("*... cuncta quae illis uerbis significata sunt in nostra notitia iam fuisse.*") and, therefore, knew the meanings, or significations, of each of the words used. The listener (or reader) already knew the meanings of the terms 'three boys', 'furnace', and so on. However, the boys' names (Ananias, Azarias, and Misahel) are as unknown as '*sarabarae*', and the familiar terms in the story were unable to bring about knowledge of these names⁴²⁴.

Aug. ...respondebo cuncta, quae illis uerbis significata sunt in nostra notitia iam fuisse. nam quid sint tres pueri, quid fornax, quid ignis, quid rex, quid denique illaesi ab igne ceteraque omnia iam tenebam, quae uerba illa significant. Ananias uero et Azarias et Misahel tam mihi ignoti sunt quam illae

⁴²⁴ The story does teach one that these were the names of the boys but gives nothing more than this. This teaching may indeed be better described to consist of belief rather than knowledge.

sarabarae, nec ad eos cognoscendos haec me nomina quicquam adiuuerunt aut adiuuare iam poterunt.

(37)

0634 The story itself, which primarily demonstrates the power of belief, signals the response to the place of narrative within Augustine's epistemology. Testimony is, in itself, concerned with belief and not with knowledge.

0635 Everything which one receives in historical testimony is most accurately described as something we believe (*credere*) rather than know (*scire*). This fact is observed by the authorities, upon whose testimony one must base one's belief ("... *ipsi quibus credimus... ait enim propheta*"), in Scripture. For it is stated (Isaiah 7:9), that unless one believes, one will not understand⁴²⁵, which signals an awareness that these two items (belief and understanding) are distinct.

Aug. ...haec autem omnia, quae in illa leguntur historia ita illo tempore facta esse, ut scripta sunt, credere me potius quam scire confiteor. neque istam differentiam idem ipsi, quibus credimus, nescierunt; ait enim propheta: «nisi credideritis, non intellegetis», quod non dixisset profecto, si nihil distare iudicasset.

(37)

What one understands, one also believes, but one does not understand all that one believes. Also, what one understands, one knows, but one does not know all that one believes.

quod ergo intellego, id etiam credo; at non omne, quod credo, etiam intellego. omne autem, quod intellego, scio; non omne, quod credo, scio.

(37)

0636 Although it seems clear that Augustine does to an extent equate knowledge with understanding, what he is concerned with particularly at this stage in the discussion is belief. The conclusions provided by the above statements (DM 37, v.

⁴²⁵ The concept of understanding is central for Augustine and in DM 37 he directly parallels knowing (*scire*) with understanding (*intellegere*): "...*credere...scire...credideritis...intellegetis...*" DM 37. Augustine's treatment of knowledge and understanding in this regard will be briefly considered below (§ 9.1.1).

sup. 0635) are that, although understanding entails knowledge and belief, belief does not entail understanding or knowledge.

0637 Belief would then appear to be a prerequisite for knowledge and understanding, although not *vice versa*, and so belief is useful as a progression towards knowledge and understanding. That is to say, as knowledge and understanding require belief and belief does not require knowledge and understanding, then belief must be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for knowledge and understanding.

0638 It is useful to believe much which one does not know, such as the story from Daniel 3. Although most things cannot be known, what is known, through reasoning (as seen in 0635-0637), is that there is usefulness in believing such things.

Aug. ...nec ideo nescio, quam sit utile credere etiam multa, quae nescio; cui utilitati hanc quoque adiungo de tribus pueris historiam. quare pleraque rerum, cum scire non possim, quanta tamen utilitate credantur scio.
(37)

In such a way does Augustine suggest a possible addition to belief so as to achieve what might be knowledge, or understanding. For Augustine stresses that, although there is much which cannot be known (“... *pleraque rerum cum scire non possum...*”), he does know (“... *scio*”) how useful it is to believe (“... *quanta tamen utilitate credantur*”). That Augustine knows this fact, unlike his belief of the story from Daniel which is based upon authoritative testimony, is due to the process of reasoning which has preceded and upon which the conclusion that belief is useful is based⁴²⁶.

0639 This idea of the usefulness of belief coincides with the proposal which Augustine is presenting for language. In the example of ‘*sarabara*’ sentences such as ‘*si quaedam capitum tegmina nuncupantur hoc nomine [sarabarae]*’ (DM 33) do tell one something about *sarabarae*, namely that they are a sort of head covering. In

addition, when one actually sees an example of a *sarabara* and gains a concept of what it is, through this concept one gets to know the meaning of the term ‘*sarabara*’ more fully (‘... *nomen ipsum plenius... illis cognitis nosse*’ DM 37). This does not suggest that one learns the meaning of ‘*sarabarae*’ through hearing the sentence which states that they are head coverings but rather that one receives an approximation of the meaning and, according to Augustine’s thesis, this approximation (functioning like the term ‘*ecce!*’, DM 34) points out, or reminds one, what sort of thing to look for. The sentence within which the unfamiliar word occurs, therefore, does not teach one what the term means, in the sense that it does not transmit any knowledge, but it provides, at best, a sort of testimony which provides belief not knowledge.

9.1.1. Knowledge and Understanding.

0640 Augustine presents a clear distinction between knowledge and belief in a passage from the *Retractationes* (1.14.3) on the *de utilitate credendi*⁴²⁷. The distinction is largely based on grounds for justification. True belief is often called knowledge, and although this is not accurate in a strict sense of the word, it is, nevertheless, an acceptable way of talking in general terms. The sort of justification which validates true belief is adequate testimony (*quod idoneis testibus credimus*), and such testimony depends upon sense-perception (*quod percipimus nostri corporis sensibus*) or upon credible witnesses (*quod fide dignis credimus testibus*). Knowledge,

⁴²⁶ Augustine’s view of what constitutes knowledge will be considered more fully below (§ 9.1.1, § 9.3.1, and § 9.3.2).

⁴²⁷ The following discussion of the passages cited from the *Retractationes* and *de utilitate credendi* is indebted to Burnyeat: 1987, 6-7.

on the other hand, relies on the firm reasoning of the mind (*scire... quod mentis firma ratione comprehendimus*).

et quod dixi: «multum interesse utrum aliquid mentis certa ratione teneatur, quod scire dicimus, an fama uel litteris credendum posteris utiliter commendetur», et paulo post: «quod scimus igitur debemus rationi, quod credimus auctoritati», non sic accipiendum est, ut in sermone usitatore uereamur nos dicere scire quod idoneis testibus credimus. proprie quippe cum loquimur, id solum scire dicimus quod mentis firma ratione comprehendimus. cum uero loquimur uerbis consuetudini aptioribus, sicut loquitur etiam scriptura diuina, non dubitemus dicere scire nos et quod percipimus nostri corporis sensibus et quod fide dignis credimus testibus, dum tamen inter haec et illud quid distet intellegamus.

(*retr.* 1.14.3)

0641 While not strictly knowledge, belief is rational and relies on testimony which is both well grounded and adequate. However, knowledge has some additional factor which the firm reasoning of the mind adds to true belief. What this additional factor is may be seen in the contrast between knowledge and belief in *de utilitate credendi*.

quod intellegimus igitur, debemus rationi, quod credimus, auctoritati, quod opinamur, errori.

(*util. cred.* 25)

The contrast between knowledge and belief, which is described in terms of ‘*scire*’ and ‘*credere*’ in the *retractationes* (1.14.3), uses the term ‘*scire*’ as an equivalent term for ‘*intellegere*’, as it occurs in the passage from *de utilitate credendi* (25). What differentiates knowledge from belief is reasoning such as to make the item in question understood. Justified true belief cannot, in this sense, be equated with knowledge, for such belief does not provide an understanding of something. It is only the firm reasoning of the mind, leading to an understanding of the item under consideration, which can accurately be described as knowledge.

0642 The distinction between knowing and believing as presented in DM 37 (*v. sup.* 0635-0639) follows this pattern. Knowledge requires belief together with the additional factor of rational understanding.

9.2. The Inner Christ.

0643 Everything which is understood depends not upon some external testimony (“... *non loquentem qui personat foris*”) but rather one consults an inner truth (“... *intus... consulimus ueritatem*”). Words may, as discussed above (§ 8.1.5), function so as to remind an individual to look, although they do not teach in any strict sense. The obvious contrast being made here is that understanding is not an externally directed process (*foris*) but is essentially inner (*intus*). External elements may serve so as to remind or encourage one to understand, but the process of actual understanding can only occur inwardly.

Aug. ...de uniuersis autem, quae intelligimus, non loquentem, qui personat foris, sed intus ipsi menti praesidentem consulimus ueritatem, uerbis fortasse ut consulamus admoniti.

(38)

Truth, as it were, sits before, and directs (*praesidentem*), the mind inwardly (*intus ipsi menti*), and would appear to be such as to be ever present to the mind and directional in nature. The sense of ‘*praesidentem*’ seems to be somewhat paradoxical in this passage in that the truth is present before the very mind of an individual and is available for consultation, as one might look at an external object for verification. Truth sits before the mind and one would appear to simply have to open the eye of the mind, as it were, to consult it. Yet it also functions so as to direct the mind. In the primary sense of ‘*praesidentem*’ (‘to sit before’) the mind appears to have an active role, while in the secondary sense (‘to direct’) the mind has a less active, perhaps even passive role.

0644 This truth which presides inwardly over the mind and which truly teaches (*docet*), in that it brings about understanding, is Christ. Christ dwells in the inner man

(“... *in interiore homine habitare*”⁴²⁸). In this sense the paradoxical nature of ‘*praesidentem*’ is more accurately understood. There is a difference between looking and seeing and the truth is present before one’s mind. However, one must firstly look so as to be able to see, and on looking one may be directed rightly, by the truth itself, or Christ, so as to see. Implicit within this is the idea of seeking so as to find. Knowledge is available to the human mind but to attain it one must attempt to understand, and through enquiry one may be granted understanding. Christ, as the consultative power for the human mind, will be seen to be Augustine’s solution to the Paradox of Enquiry (v. *inf.* § 9.2). Christ, as truth, is the unchangeable power (*incommutabilis... uirtus*) and eternal wisdom (*sempiterna sapientia*) of God. It is this power and wisdom which every rational mind consults in its attempt to understand.

Aug. ... ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus, id est incommutabilis dei uirtus atque sempiterna sapientia, quam quidem omnis rationalis anima consulit...
(38)

0645 The religious dimension of understanding is seen in the fact that understanding depends upon an awareness, through direct inner consultation, with the truth. This truth is Christ, and Christ is the power and wisdom of God.

0646 This wisdom is revealed (*panditur*) and so is dispensed upon an individual who is not strictly active but this revelation is dependent upon how capable the individual is to receive understanding and in this sense the individual is proactive. Augustine embraces the paradoxical nature of the Paradox of Enquiry through a paradoxical solution. The passage from ignorance to knowledge depends upon a mediator, and this mediator is Christ. In this sense the human mind cannot bridge the gap in the Paradox between ignorance and knowledge and requires an agency to

⁴²⁸ Augustine uses this same phrase in *de vera religione*: “*in interiore homine habitat ueritas.*” *vera rel.* 72. The ultimate source for this phrase is Ephesians 3:14-20, although Augustine’s Neoplatonic interpretation of it may be influenced by Plato’s ‘ὁ ἐν τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ’ (R. 589a).

facilitate this. Truth is transcendental and to pass from the material to the transcendental the human mind needs a mediator. This mediator is most obviously that which dwells in both realms, which is Christ, namely, the Word of God made flesh.

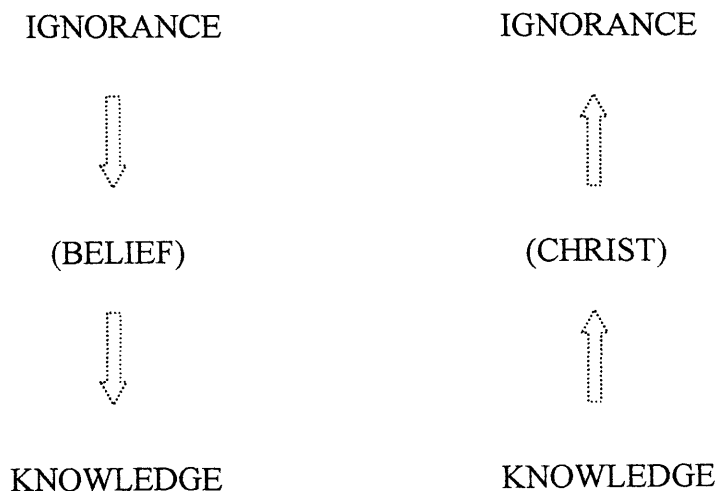
0647 However, the solution can also be stated in more humanistic terms, where there is a large degree of active movement towards understanding on the part of humans. For between the paradoxical terms of ignorance and knowledge there is the intermediary of belief and to move from ignorance to knowledge one must do so through belief. Belief is the primary aspect in the relationship between humanity and God, through Christ.

Aug. ...sed tantum cuique panditur, quantum capere propter propriam siue malam siue bonam uoluntatem potest.

(38)

0648 The human passage from ignorance, through belief, to knowledge is active. The passage from ignorance, through Christ, to knowledge depends upon divine grace. In the left-hand column the initiation of the process is human and proceeds from ignorance to knowledge. In the right-hand column the initiation of the process is divine and demonstrates how knowledge is passed on to the ignorant via Christ.

(D32)



0649 Understanding is only achievable for an individual insofar as the enquiry is directed towards the correct moral end⁴²⁹. The granting of insight, or understanding, depends upon the will (*uoluntatem*; v. *sup.* DM 38, 0647) of the individual. Augustine presents a concept of the will which is "... prior to and independent of the act of intellectual cognition, yet fundamentally different from sensual and irrational emotion" (Dihle: 1982, 127). The will reflects the active choice made by anyone in seeking truth, that is, the beliefs they engage in. If these beliefs are grounded in a good will (*bonam uoluntatem*) the revelation will be more, if in a wicked will (*malam... uoluntatem*) then the revelation will be less, or perhaps not at all.

[A]s stated by St. Augustine himself (*s.* 150.4; cf. *ep.* 130.9, *lib. arb.* 3.22ff.) the striving of *amor*⁴³⁰ ... is regarded as aiming at happiness or perfection (εὐδαιμονία, *beatitudo*) by means of assimilation to what is being loved (Plato *lg.* 10.904a-b; August. *s.* 96.1), and disregards, in the more advanced stages on the way to perfection, the whole realm of matter and sensual life. But differently from the Platonic tradition St. Augustine does not believe that the goal is approached exclusively in a chain of cognitive acts. To him, human life and progress is to be conclusively evaluated in terms of *caritas* and *concupiscentia* or obedience and disobedience - that is to say in terms of will - rather than in those of knowledge and error or vision and blindness⁴³¹ ... *Fruitio Dei*, the ultimate goal of human endeavor⁴³² ... is defined by St. Augustine as continuous love of God and one's neighbor for their own sake (*as fruendum Deo et proximo in Deo*, *civ.* 19.70, *doctr. chr.* 1.4, *en. Ps.* 915, etc.), that is to say without trying to get hold or dispose of them in order to proceed towards a further goal. The perverted will (*mala uoluntas*) in the empirical state of mankind, however, constantly exchanges the adequate objects of *uti* (*diligere propter aliud*, love for the sake of some other thing) and *frui* (*diligere propter se ipsum*, love for the sake of the thing itself⁴³³).

(Dihle: 1987, 126 n.18)

0650 The human is here involved in an active choice and it is upon this basis which the directing power of truth will be granted in greater or lesser degree. Humans have different abilities and the path to knowledge is therefore presented as a gradual process, quicker for some than others (*tantum... quantum*). However, it would appear

⁴²⁹ Cf. *vera rel.* 3; *ord.* 2.25; *sol.* 1.2.

⁴³⁰ As compared with the Platonic ἔρωσ of, primarily, the *Symposium*.

⁴³¹ Cf. Holte: 1962.

⁴³² Cf. Haussleiter: 1972, 551ff.

that even for one with a relatively bad will there is the possibility of ascent, for if one is granted as much understanding as one is capable of receiving then one can still potentially arrive at the level of understanding attainable by humans⁴³⁴. Knowledge therefore depends upon divine grace but also upon how far one is able to receive such knowledge, and this ability depends upon one's intention in seeking after knowledge in the first place.

0651 Error is not caused by any defect in the truth which is consulted by an enquirer. As it is not the fault of the light when one's eyes make a mistake when perceiving something. Augustine draws the parallel between perception of the external world through perception by means of the eyes and perception of intelligible items, or understanding through reason, by means of the eye of the mind. In both cases there is an illumination through which the eyes can see, or the mind can understand, depending on the ability of the eyes, or mind, to do so.

0652 The metaphor of light and illumination is central to Augustine's treatment of the acquisition of knowledge⁴³⁵. As light in the material world shows (*ostendit*) the items available to perception, so too does truth, or Christ, show intelligible items, and the connectedness between them. In this sense the illumination is not unlike the Birdcatcher example (DM 32) for the equipment for birdcatching, and interrelationship between them so as to enable the actual act of catching a bird, are shown to the observer and her understanding of birdcatching very much depends upon her own intelligence, or her ability to 'see' the items and their connectedness.

⁴³³ Cf. Thraede: 1977, 130.

⁴³⁴ How far humans can achieve true knowledge, if at all, will be considered in due course (§ 9.3.1, § 9.3.2, and § 11).

⁴³⁵ This depends upon the Neoplatonic treatment of illumination arising from Plato's use of the sun image in the *Republic* (507d ff.) and from illumination in his 7th letter (*ep.* 7.341c).

0653 An item of knowledge is present, in its totality, and available for
comprehension and the level of understanding very much depends upon one's
individual ability to look and see.

Aug. ...et si quando fallitur, non fit uitio consultae ueritatis, ut neque huius, quae foris est, lucis uitium est, quod corporei oculi saepe falluntur, quam lucem de rebus uisibilibus consuli fatemur, ut eas nobis, quantum cernere ualemus, ostendat.

(38)

9.3. Immediacy.

0654 Knowledge of the material world is accessed through employing the elements of this world (*elementa huius mundi*), that is, the corporeal bodies which one perceives (*eademque corpora quae sentimus*) and the senses themselves (*sensusque ipsos*) through which one perceives them. The mind uses (*mens utitur*) these elements of the material world as interpreters so as to know such things (*quibus tamquam interpretibus ad talia noscenda*). Knowledge of intelligibles is accessed through a rational interaction with the inner truth.

Aug. ...quod si et de coloribus lucem et de ceteris, quae per corpus sentimus, elementa huius mundi eademque corpora quae sentimus sensusque ipsos, quibus tamquam interpretibus ad talia noscenda mens utitur, de his autem, quae intelleguntur, interiorem ueritatem ratione consulimus...

(39)

In both cases there is the correlation of like with like⁴³⁶, for knowledge of what is perceived through the body is accessed by consulting the very elements of this world (i.e. the things perceived and the senses which perceive them) and knowledge of the intelligible world is accessed through consultation with intelligible truth⁴³⁷. In the case

⁴³⁶ For a discussion of the place of the doctrine of like-knows-like with particular reference to Plato's epistemology cf. Anscombe: 1993, 90-98.

⁴³⁷ The idea of ascent to, and union with, the divine through the intellect has a long history in Platonism, based upon the view that humans are similar to the divine by reason of the intellect. This idea was developed in a Christian context by Origen, cf. *princ.* 4.4.9.

of sensible items the mind uses the elements of the world as a means of interpreting what is to be known⁴³⁸.

0655 Knowledge, therefore, depends upon direct contact with the object of knowledge. Augustine's epistemology depends upon immediacy, such that for any x to be known, one must directly perceive x perceptually or intellectually⁴³⁹. Words then teach nothing but their own sounds, for the items they refer to are known either through direct perceptual contact or through direct intellectual contact.

Aug. ...quid dici potest, unde clareat uerbis nos aliquid discere praeter ipsum, qui aures percutit sonum?

(39)

All perception is either through the senses (*sensu corporis*) or through the mind (*mente*), the former are sensible (*sensibilia*), or carnal (*carnalia*), items, while the latter are intelligible (*intelligibilia*), or spiritual (*spiritalia*), items.

Aug. ...namque omnia, quae percipimus, aut sensu corporis aut mente percipimus. illa sensibilia, haec intellegibilia siue, ut more nostrorum auctorum loquar, illa carnalia, haec spiritalia nominamus.

(39)

9.3.1. Sensibilia.

0656 Sensible items must be immediate and available for verification when they are the objects under discussion. When one is questioned about a sensible item which is present (*praesto*) one is able to answer, so that when asked about, for example, the new moon, while looking at it (*intuentibus*), one is able to respond because the moon is present to one for verification.

⁴³⁸ The role of interpretation in the act of acquiring knowledge of the material world will be expanded on below (§ 9.3.2 and § 10). Also, v. *sup.* § 6, § 7, and § 8. One only has knowledge proper of intelligible items because there is no need for interpretation and the mind can directly grasp the things in themselves.

⁴³⁹ Cf. the 'epistemic categories' introduced above (0621).

Aug. ...de illis [sensibilibus] cum interrogamur, respondemus, si praesto sunt ea, quae sentimus, uelut cum a nobis quaeritur intuentibus lunam nouam, qualis aut ubi sit.

(39)

The introduction of the example of the moon is significant here for the moon is that which is the celestial body which is metaphorically opposite to the sun. The idea of illumination gives rise to the opposites of sun⁴⁴⁰, for the intelligible reality, and moon, for sensible reality.

0657 The moon, as having a sphere of influence opposite to that of the sun, is used to present situations where belief, opinion, or doubt are implied, while the sun and light refers to the opposite cases where knowledge, understanding, and truth are under consideration.

R. ergo uel ita deum nosse tibi satis est, ut nosti, quo cras signo luna cursura sit?

A. non est satis. nam hoc sensibus adprobo. ignoro autem, utrum uel deus uel aliqua naturae occulta causa subito lunae ordinem cursumque conmutet. quod si acciderit, totum illud, quod praesumpseram, falsum erit.

R. et credis hoc fieri posse?

A. non credo. sed ego, quid sciam, quaero, non quid credam. omne autem, quod scimus, recte fortasse etiam credere dicimur, at non omne, quod credimus, etiam scire.

R. respuis igitur in hac causa omne testimonium sensuum?

A. prorsus respuo.

(sol. 1.8)

The use of the moon image in the DM passage under discussion (DM 39) brings with it the implication of the fallibility of the senses and the idea of the lack of certainty in the sensible realm. Therefore, although Augustine is concerned with the need for immediacy so that one may have verified access to what is under discussion, there is with this image (of the moon) the contrast between awareness of what is true (that is, what belongs to the intelligible realm and which is accessed through illumination, discussed in DM 40) and what is not (that is, what belongs to the sensible world).

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Plato, *R.* 507d ff.

0658 When, in contrast to the situation where one speaks of what is before one's eyes, one is asked about something which is not present and immediate to the person raising the questions, the questioner then simply believes one's testimony. This individual does not directly perceive the item under discussion for himself (*non uidet*) and so does not learn anything unless he actually sees what is under discussion. What is learned depends upon the item observed and the faculty of sight rather than upon the words. Words in themselves have no impact for they sound the same to one who sees the item as they do to one who does not. The crucial element in the process is the actual act of seeing the item.

Aug. ... hic ille, qui interrogat, si non uidet, credit uerbis et saepe non credit, discit autem nullo modo, nisi et ipse quod dicitur uideat, ubi iam non uerbis, sed rebus ipsis et sensibus discit. nam uerba eadem sonant uidenti, quae non uidenti etiam sonuerunt.

(39)

0659 In the situation where it is what is not presently perceived (*non... quae coram sentimus*) but what was perceived in the past (*quae aliquando sensimus*) that is under discussion, what is actually spoken of (*loquimur*) is not the actual item (*non iam res ipsas*) but rather the image of it which is impressed in the memory (*imagines ab eis [rebus] impressas memoriaeque mandatas*). These images are not the things themselves and so are, in this sense, false (*falsa*) and one can only accurately speak of the items under discussion (*uera dicamus*) by speaking not of what is seen and perceived (*non nos ea uidere ac sentire... narramus*) but rather of what *has been* seen and perceived (*uidisse ac sensisse narramus*)⁴⁴¹.

Aug. ...cum vero non de his, quae coram sentimus, sed de his, quae aliquando sensimus, quaeritur, non iam res ipsas, sed imagines ab eis impressas memoriaeque mandatas loquimur, quae omnino quomodo uera dicamus, cum falsa intueamur, ignoro, nisi quia non nos ea uidere ac sentire, sed uidisse ac sensisse narramus.

(39)

0660 These images are stored in the memory (*imagines in memoriae penetralibus... gestamus*) and serve as proofs⁴⁴² of a sort (*quaedam documenta*) of things previously perceived (*rerum ante sensarum*). They serve as a private validation (*animo contemplantes*) of the accuracy (*bona conscientia non mentimur*) of what one speaks about (*cum loquimur*).

Aug. ...ita illas imagines in memoriae penetralibus rerum ante sensarum quaedam documenta gestamus, quae animo contemplantes bona conscientia non mentimur, cum loquimur.

(39)

0661 These proofs are such for the individual who possesses the images (*sed nobis sunt ista documenta*). If the listener had perceived the item, or items, in the past and which are now spoken he, therefore, learns nothing through another's words but simply re-accesses (*recognoscit*) the images which he has stored (*ablatis... imaginibus*) within his own memory. Words in this sense simply serve as reminders in that they prompt the re-accessing of latent information stored within one's memory. Words as items causing recollection, therefore, are not, in this sense, in any way similar to the σημεία ὑπομνηστικά (v. sup. § 2.3) but are rather understood as functioning along the lines of Platonic ἀνάμνησις (v. sup. § 2.3.1) in that they remind one of something already seen and which is available to one's consciousness through accessing information which is latent. If anything in this process could be described as σημεία ὑπομνηστικά it would be the *imago* which serves as a proof of the item previously perceived. This proof lies in the relation of the concept, or image, to the item previously perceived and not in the relation of word to concept or in word to item. The word serves as a prompt to recall an item stored in the memory and is not evidence about the object referred to, or even about the mental content signified.

⁴⁴¹ DM 39 and particularly the import of the past tense with regards to signification is discussed above (0366-0373).

⁴⁴² For the Augustine's use of 'documentum' as 'proof' cf. *conf.* 5.25; 7.26; *div.qu.* 13; 20; etc.

0662 If the listener has not previously perceived the item under discussion, he can only be said to believe the words not to learn anything from them.

Aug. ...sed nobis sunt ista documenta; is enim qui audit, si ea sensit atque adfuit, non discit meis uerbis, sed recognoscit ablati secum et ipse imaginibus; si autem illa non sensit, quis non eum credere potius uerbis quam discere intellegat?

(39)

0663 The above passage (DM 39) raises serious problems for Augustine's view of sensible memory and its role in his epistemology. Memory is crucial in Augustine's epistemology, within its bounds lie everything which the human mind can think of or about. Memory can be divided into that of what is sensible and that of what is intelligible. Sensible memory is concerned with all sensible objects and experiences so that to encounter anything with spatial or temporal extension requires just such a faculty. One cannot perceive or understand even the shortest word, or indeed syllable, without sensible memory, for the beginning of the sound is temporally distinct, no matter how brief the time span, from the end and so for one to grasp the word, or sound, one must remember the beginning of the sound on hearing the end (cf. *mus.* 6.21). In an epistemology placing such importance in memory one would, therefore, expect memory to be regarded on the whole as reliable.

0664 It is, therefore, rather surprising that Augustine appears to question the reliability of sensible memory, that is, memory of past perceived objects, in DM 39. When making a claim, based on memory, about something which is now either absent or non-existent one relies upon memory images; which is to say, one makes a claim about a present image, not about the actual past object and in so doing there would appear to be a break with both the object and therefore with the past. This in turn raises questions over the reliability of such claims, for the object is no longer available as a means of verification.

0665 Three main issues of importance in DM 39 will briefly be considered: firstly, a consideration of the problem arising from the distinction between memory-image and past object; secondly, a consideration of the wider implications of this for Augustine's epistemology; and finally, an analysis of Augustine's view on the reliability of such memory claims.

0666 Due to the difficult nature of the passage, a brief translation of the central section will now be given, with a view to bringing out and clarifying the major issues involved, to this end the translation has been kept as literal as possible.

When we are asked about [sensible things], we reply, if the things which we perceive through the senses are present, just as when we are looking at a new moon it is asked of us of what sort or where it is... But when there is enquiry not about those things which we perceive in person, but about those which we formerly perceived, we now talk not of the things themselves but of the images impressed by them and committed to the memory. How we can at all talk of these as being true when we can see that they are false, I shall ignore; unless it is because we say that we do not see and perceive them, but that we *have* seen them and *have* perceived them. Thus we bear these images in the recesses of our memory as some sort of proof of things previously perceived, which we contemplate in the mind and can speak of with clear conscience that we do not lie. But these are proofs for us...

(39)

0667 Augustine conceives of sight, or perception, in a literal and metaphorical sense. One is sensory and the other is mental.

uisiones enim duae sunt, una, sentientis; altera, cogitantis.
(*trin.* 11.16)

What is spoken of is that to which the will directs one's attention. In any physical act of seeing a present object the will directs one's sight towards a physical object.

ea quae oculis aut ullo alio corporis sensu requiruntur, ipsa mens quaeritur - ipsa enim etiam sensum carnis intendit, tunc autem invenit, cum in ea quae requiruntur idem sensus venit.
(*trin.* 10.10)

However, in a memory act involving past perceived objects one directs one's inner sight towards one's mental image of the past perceived object.

tamen eandem eius (sc. corporis) imaginem non corpus in spiritu, sed ipse spiritus in se ipso facit celeritate mirabili.

(Gn. litt. 12.33)

In Augustine's thought the object of one's speech and that of one's articulate thought are essentially the same thing.

omnia...quae per sensus sui corporis...percepta scit animus humanus, thesauro memoriae condita tenet, ex quibus gignitur uerbum uerum, quando quod scimus loquimur, sed uerbum ante omnem sonum, ante omnem cogitationem soni. tunc enim est uerbum simillimum rei notae⁴⁴³, de qua gignitur et imago eius, quoniam de uisione scientiae uisio cogitationis exoritur.

(trin.15.22)

The inner-word (*uerbum ante omnem sonum*) is essential in actualising latent memory images to the conscious mind.

nec tamen quia dicimus locutiones cordis esse cogitationes, ideo non sunt etiam visiones exortae de notitiae uisionibus, quando verae sunt. foris enim cum per corpus haec fiunt, aliud est locutio, aliud visio; intus autem cum cogitamus utrumque unum est.

(trin. 15.18)

The inner-word being the means for accessing and actualising one's '*visio scientiae*' or '*visio notitiae*'. If one speaks of whatever one sees, then in talk of past perceived objects one sees memory images. Therefore, when asked about previously perceived objects one speaks about images, "*imagines...loquimur*" (DM 39).

0668 Therefore, it would appear that if the speech is not about the actual things (*vera*), then it is in fact about things which are false (*falsa*), and that these inner images are only evidential (*documenta*) for those who possess them. The things which speech is about are *falsa* in every case where one is talking about the past, just because they are not the actual things. This raises two main questions: firstly, how far

⁴⁴³ The inner-word is described as "*simillimum rei notae*": the 'thing known' being the latent knowledge within the memory. However, Augustine also equates the inner-word and this knowledge: "*verbum quod eiusmodi sit omnino, cuiusmodi est illa scientia de qua nascitur*" (trin. 15.19). The inner word and the latent knowledge in the memory would appear to be equated when the word is used so as to actualise the knowledge which may then be utilised verbally (v. inf. 0671).

are another's words reliable; and secondly, how reliable are one's own memory images and can they be verified?

0669 Through direct experience of objects a kind of likeness or immaterial trace is left in the memory, which Augustine likens to a great store-house (*conf.* 10.12-15) or to a stomach.

quasi glutens in uentrem ita in memoria reposuerit, poterit recordando quodam modo ruminare...

(*trin.* 12.23)

nimirum ergo memoria quasi uenter est animi...

(*conf.* 10.21)

These likenesses are recalled by the will directing the mind's attention.

et quemadmodum cum per sensum corporis dicimus corpora, fit eorum aliqua similitudo in animo nostro, quae phantasia memoriae est: non enim omnino ipsa corpora in animo sunt, cum ea cogitamus; sed eorum similitudines.

(*trin.* 9.16)

0670 In any act of perception one perceives 'forms' (cf. '*species*', *trin.* 11.6; '*formae*', *civ.* 11.27) of the objects which one is perceiving, and these forms bring about forms in the sense, which in turn bring about forms in the memory, and finally there arise forms in the mind (*trin.* 11.2-6). The perceiver is not merely passively affected by these forms, which are emitted by objects, but rather the will focuses the attention on the object and actively brings about the occurrence of forms in one's mind: "...[in] the act of vision... the faculty of seeing is joined with the object of visual perception by the will of the perceiving individual" (Dihle: 1982, 125). As with acts of perception so too is there a similar process involved in memory acts; as in perception where the sensible object produces a form within the senses, so inwardly is an articulate image produced by the latent memory image. In vision there is the visible form through which the sense is enformed.

species uisibilis qua sensus corporis formabatur, et eius similitudo quae fiebat in sensu formato...

(*trin.* 11.6).

In memory acts the likeness, or form, is stored by the commemorative mind.

cum constet ex corporis similitudine quam memoria tenet, et ex ea quae inde formatur in acie recordantis animi; tamen sic una et singularis apparet...

(*trin.* 11.6)

The will focuses the attention towards these latent memory images, actualising them as articulate memory-images. These memory-images are, insofar as memory of past perceived objects is concerned, a representation of the object once seen and one, as it were, looks at this image when recalling its object.

0671 Both articulate image and speech arise from information contained in the memory; for past perceived objects this information is latent images of which ‘copies’ are actualised. The inner-word, which is not itself in any specific language⁴⁴⁴, actualises a formed thought from what is known which can be utilised verbally and thus used as a word in any particular language, and so any verbal word signifies both physical object and one’s image of it. It is here that a major problem lies. For it would appear that Augustine does not find any difficulty in images *qua* images. In DM 39 he raises no objection against images *per se* but rather objects that one speaks about one thing as though it were another (that is to say, call what is *falsa*, *uera*). This sits comfortably with the argument concerning language and reality in the dialogue. The force of *uera/falsa* in the passage is that an error of signification has been made (as in the sophism of the lion, DM 23, where the error of confusing the word’s meaning and its object, allows one to assert that in saying ‘lion’ one produces the actual creature from one’s mouth); and that when one says, for example, ‘Carthage’ (as a past perceived object) then to regard the signification as the actual city is to mistake what

⁴⁴⁴ v. *inf.* 0686.

is *uera* with what is *falsa*. Augustine is, to this extent, concerned with the relationship between word, image, and a now absent object or state of affairs. In sense perception there is a reliability, or sorts, in the knowledge acquired, for one has the actual and present object before one, but in the recollection of past perceived objects one is talking necessarily about what is in the past (“*uidisse...sentisse...*”, DM 39) and the object is no longer present, or perhaps no longer existent. The images are *not* (*falsa*’, DM 39; cf. *ep.* 7.3) the objects and the relationship between the two is problematic.

0672 The memory-image has an essential function in mediating between any act of recollection and the physical object itself and so it would seem that, for Augustine, when a claim is made concerning a past perceived object that the claim is not about the object at all, but rather about its image in one’s memory. In effect Augustine seems to be saying that “... whenever...asked about familiar, but absent, sensible things we respond by changing the subject”⁴⁴⁵. How one can properly be said to succeed in answering another person’s question comes to the conclusion that to talk at all, on hearing another’s words, one must turn one’s mind to that which is signified.

auditis uerbis ad ea feratur animus, quorum ista sunt signa...
(22)

That is to say, one turns one’s attention to that which is signified.

signo dato id, quod significatur, adtendere...
(23)

Therefore, for there to be meaningful discourse, the things signified must be available to those who speak. When this is taken with the additional premise that “...that which a man’s words signify is what he speaks of”⁴⁴⁶, one does indeed return to the position that memory-claims are not what they appear to be about (that is, their physical object) but rather about their images. So there would appear to be evidence, internal to

⁴⁴⁵ Matthews, in Markus: 1972, 168.

⁴⁴⁶ Matthews in Markus: 1972, 171.

the DM and regarding Augustine's general view of sensation, memory, and language to support this interpretation.

0673 Although there is no direct discussion, in Augustine, of the objects of memory claims, there are a number of passages which do support the above interpretation of DM 39 when considered in conjunction with it.

0674 Much of the relevant textual evidence supports the view that when a sensible object is present it is the object of sight which is the subject, while when it is absent there is a shift in subject matter to image.

proque illa uisione quae foris erat cum sensus ex corpore sensibili formaretur, succedit intus similis uisio, cum ex eo quod memoria tenet, formatur acies animi, et absentia corpora cogitantur: uoluntasque ipsa quomodo foris corpori obiecto formandum sensum admouebat, formatumque iungebat, sic aciem recordantis animi conuertit ad memoriam, ut ex eo quod illa retinuit, ista formetur, et sit in cogitatione similis uisio.

(*trin.* 11.6)

The object of thought and that to which the will directs the attention is the image.

Indeed, in an earlier passage in the *de trinitate* the suggestion would appear to be that when an object is absent one must think about the image of it.

quae uestigia tanquam imprimuntur memoriae, quando haec quae foris sunt corporalia sentiuntur, ut etiam cum absunt ista, praesto sint tamen imagines eorum cogitantibus.

(*trin.* 10.11)

When one considers that the object of thought about past perceived objects and that of speech are in effect the same thing, there would appear to be a similar rationale at work in both the above passage and in DM 39. That is to say, when an object previously perceived is absent there is no suggestion in either passage that one thinks/speaks about the object *via* the intermediary of the memory-image but rather that one simply thinks/speaks about the image. In both passages there is a firm awareness of the relevant sense of what is absent and what is not.

*...respondemus, si praesto sunt ea, quae sentimus...sed...quae aliquando
sensimus...non iam res...sed imagines...loquimur.*
(39)

*haec...corporalia...etiam cum absunt ista, praesto sunt tamen imagines eorum
cogitantibus*

(*trin.* 10.11)

Much importance is focused on what 'object' is present.

*dicimus locutiones cordis esse cogitationes...[quae] sunt etiam uisiones
exortae de notitiae uisionibus, quando uerae sunt. foris enim cum per corpus
haec fiunt, aliud est locutio, aliud uisio: intus autem cum cogitamus, utrumque
unum est.*

(*trin.* 15.18)

0675 It appears then that Augustine is making the perfectly valid claim that recollection does not entail a direct connection with the actual past perceived object which one is recalling. However, in doing so he also asserts that any speech of past perceived objects is wholly referential to these memory-images. Memory-images which are evidential only for their possessor. This raises the question how, if the actual object is no longer accessible and if, in such contexts, thought is about the image, which is apparently severed from its object and thus from its connection with the past, there can then be verification in any reliable sense. Matthews' (in Markus:1972, 173-174) interpretation comes to the conclusion that in attempting to say how we can answer questions about past perceived objects Augustine comes to the conclusion that we actually cannot. The problem is that, apparently, Augustine's approach is too restrictive, for the question as to how we can "...answer questions about sensible things from memory can be taken in at least two rather different ways...(1) What mental mechanism makes it possible for us to speak of things from memory?..(2) How does one make a response count as answering a question about absent sensible things?" (Matthews, in Markus: 1972, 173). Augustine, according to Matthews, focuses on (1) and not on (2); for he would seem to hold that Augustine

provides an explanation of the mechanism, that is, by considering memory-images, but gives no proper regard to the possibility of reliable verification "... other than the 'proof' of his own memory-images" (Matthews, in Markus: 1972, 174). That is to say, Augustine shows how one can give an answer to a question about past perceived objects but not why it is a reliable, or valid, answer.

0676 If one is to give a valid answer it is not sufficient that one gives an accurate or truthful account of one's own memory-image but that one is able to confirm this image as an accurate reflection of the past perceived object, and in so doing establish the answer as being about the actual object and not simply about one's personal memory-image.

0677 In Augustine's epistemology, memory performs a central function and in so far as knowledge depends upon memory, one cannot perform even the simplest cognitive act without the intermediary of memory. It is, therefore, evident that, for Augustine, memory must then play a crucial role in all knowledge claims, not simply claims concerning past perceived objects. This in turn suggests that "... in a sense every knowledge claim does involve changing the subject, since every knowledge claim involves memory" (Bubacz: 1975, 192).

0678 Perhaps those claims which are most relevant to DM 39, and to the distinctions made there, are those concerning claims about present sensible objects. For Augustine clearly sees a distinction between these and claims concerning past perceived objects and an understanding of this distinction may better provide an insight into how Augustine perceives the issue of memory claims.

0679 For Augustine, in any act of perception one does not, strictly speaking, see the thing itself but rather one experiences a series of images (or forms): that is, the image given off by the actual object, the image produced in the sight, the image produced in

the memory, and finally that produced in the mind (cf. *mus.* 6.2-3; 6.6; 6.15; 6.22; *trin.* 11.3). One's perception is of the images of bodies and so these are what one actually speaks about. Also, in that all knowledge claims are inner and depend upon the will directing the attention, or 'mind's eye' ('*mentis acies*', *trin.* 2.1; 2.18; 4.20; '*animi acies*', *trin.* 11.7; 11.8; 11.11; and *passim*), towards latent images, they are essentially imaginal (with the exception of intelligible things such as mathematical principles or number which are present to the mind in themselves⁴⁴⁷) and thus involve a change of subject.

0680 There appears to be no reason to suppose that Augustine was not aware of this consequence. He in fact makes clear the essentially inner nature of knowledge claims and their imaginal nature. As has been suggested, it seems that his concern was not images *per se* but rather that, whether they are both imaginal or not, present claims and memory claims are different and this difference relates precisely to the difficulty raised by Matthews - that of verifiability⁴⁴⁸.

0681 For Augustine, there are two kinds of sight, that of physical, external objects and involving the eyes, and that of immaterial, inner images and involving the 'mind's eye' (*animi acies*). The only real difference between physical sight and that evident in memory acts, and imagining, is that in physical sight there is an actual physical process which accompanies the inner sight. That is to say, one's sense organs are actually affected, while in memory acts they are not.

cum sensus non procedat ex corpore illo quod uidetur, sed ex corpore sentientis animantis, cui anima suo quodam miro modo contemperatur: tamen ex corpore quod uidetur gignitur uisio, id est, sensus ipse formatur; ut iam non tantum sensus qui etiam in tenebris esse integer potest, dum est

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. for example: "*illa omnia, quae de doctrinis liberalibus percepta...nec eorum imagines, sed res ipsas gero*" (*conf.* 10.16); "*cum uero de iis agitur quae mente conspicimus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce ueritatis*" (DM 40). Intelligible items will be discussed below (§ 9.3.2).

⁴⁴⁸ This is not to suggest that Augustine was unaware of the difficulty of verifying present perceptions (v. *inf.* 0683).

*incolumitas oculorum, sed etiam sensus informatus sit, quae uisio uocatur.
gignitur ergo ex re uisibili uisio, sed non ex sola, nisi adsit et uidens.
(trin. 11.3)*

This affection requires an actual physical object to be present and it would appear that insofar as there is a reaction in the mind during the process of perception that there must be an object causing it.

*quandoquidem cum imprimitur rei cuiusque imago in memoria, prius necesse est, ut adsit res ipsa, unde illa imago possit imprimi.
(conf. 10.25)*

Although inner sight occurs together with this physical sight it often occurs without any physical affect: in memory acts for example. It is in this that there is the major difficulty for Augustine with regards to memory acts involving past perceived objects, for in physical sight there is an actual object there and thus something which is verifiable for oneself or for others. The objection which may be raised that physical sight also depends upon images and, therefore, is liable to the same problem would not appear to be valid. This being due to the fact that the mind is absolutely active in the process and, in that one sees, the mind must be aware.

*nam sensum puto esse, non latere animam quod patitur corpus.
(an. quant. 41)*

Augustine does demonstrate an awareness that there can be difficulties at times in being certain that one is actually seeing something and not, for example, dreaming⁴⁴⁹. However, he does hold that normally it is clearly evident that one is being affected physically, for the will actively applies the attention and, as noted above, the mind is aware of the bodily affect upon it. This affect being absent in memory acts, being, as they are, internal.

⁴⁴⁹ “cum enim uel in somnis uel in extasi corporum exprimuntur imagines, non discernuntur omnino a corporis, nisi cum homo redditus sensibus corporis recognoscit se in illis fuisse imaginibus, quae non per sensus corporis hauriebat. quis enim, cum a somno euigilauerit, non continuo sentiat imaginaria fuisse, quae uidebat, quamuis, cum ea uideret dormiens, a uigilantium corporalibus uisis discernere non ualebat?” (Gn. litt. 12.3).

neque enim aut corpus illud sensibile ibi est, quod omnino discretum est ab animantis natura, aut sensus corporis ibi formatur ut fiat uisio, aut ipsa uoluntas id agit ut formandum sensum sensibili corpori admoueat, in eoque formatum detineat: sed pro illa specie corporis quae sentiebatur extrinsecus, succedit memoria retinens illam speciem quam per corporis sensum combibit anima; proque illa uisione quae foris erat cum sensus ex corpore sensibili formaretur, succedit intus similis uisio, cum ex eo quod memoria tenet, formatur acies animi, et absentia corpora cogitantur.

(*trin.* 11.6)

0682 Augustine would then appear to hold that one can generally distinguish when one physically sees or when one internally sees in that the mind is in some way, although how is not clearly explained, aware of the body's being physically affected. Similar to this, although not involving images as such, is Augustine's discussion of memory of emotions in *Confessiones* (10)⁴⁵⁰, where one is observed to recall an emotion, or experience of an emotion, but does not physically re-experience it. This can perhaps be most clearly elucidated by reference to pain in that when one is actually hurt one is acutely aware of it but one can recall pain without any physical affect. It would seem that, when one sees something one is, to a much less pronounced extent, physically aware⁴⁵¹ and when recalling the object one is once again unaffected physically.

0683 When one is perceiving an object one is aware of actually perceiving it and, therefore, that it is there; and to this extent it is available for verification. There is an object which is physically present to oneself, and to others. While it is precisely the fact that memory claims depend upon images which no longer have an available object which would appear to concern Augustine. Physical sight does have an outer dimension in that there is an object separate from the percipient, but in memory of past perceived objects there is nothing separate and external, only the image.

⁴⁵⁰ Although the status of remembered emotions and sensations is, by Augustine's own account, problematic, with regard to how the emotions (*passiones*) enter, and are available to, the mind it is asked: "*sed utrum per imagines an non, quis facile dixerit?*" (*conf.* 10.23).

⁴⁵¹ Cf. the discussion of sensation as a *passio* in *de quantitate animae* (41ff.).

0684 In DM 39 Augustine wants to draw a distinction between speech of present objects and that of past perceived objects. The distinction between the two types of claim is essentially one of verifiability. This does not dispel the problem of imaging as such, but there is, nevertheless, clearly a distinction to be made between the two types of image, and in terms of verifiability the past image would appear to be the more problematic. Augustine felt that the presence of the object in present claims answered, or at least went some way to answering, the apparent difficulty caused by present claims also depending on images.

0685 Augustine is aware of the complexities inherent in the validity of reference to past perceived objects, but he is also aware that there exists a related problem concerning present objects, in that claims about them also involve inner sight⁴⁵². Nevertheless, a distinction between the two is possible and is significant with respect to the concerns of the DM. There would appear to be an acute awareness of the problematic nature of remembered objects, experiences, and emotions, as concerns their nature, the possibility of speaking about them, and of their verification. Yet, there is also, the understanding that there is a close parallel between seeing, imagining, and remembering, which all essentially involve inner sight and are, therefore, equivalent to some degree in terms of their being spoken of and verified. This said, although the texts demonstrate an awareness on Augustine's part of these issues, for those who see images and their remove from reality as an inherent weakness in Augustine's representational theory of perception and memory it must, however, be said that this difficulty does not appear to be adequately countered and that there remains this difficulty for Augustine's epistemology.

⁴⁵² "magis nos arbitror ratione comprehendere esse interiorem quemdam sensum, ad quem ab istis quinque notissimis cuncta referantur. namque aliud est quo uidet bestia, aliud quo ea quae uidendo sentit, uel uiuat uel appetit; ille enim sensus in oculis est, ille autem intus in ipsa anima" (lib. arb. 2.8).

0686 The presence of the objects (of sight or of memory) depends precisely upon their being presently existing things. A presently perceived object is a presently existing image of a present object of consciousness (conscious being that one is conscious of being physically aware); while a memory image is then a present image of a past perceived object. The consequence of this is that, unless there is valid verification, one no longer has any reliable sort of access to the past. Whereas with present images one at least has access to present and verifiable objects, with memory images of past perceived objects there is no such access and so, if Augustine presents these images as unverifiable, there is a serious difficulty. For if there is no means of verifying memory-images, and if memory is fallible (as it clearly is and as Augustine acknowledges⁴⁵³) one cannot reliably know anything of the past.

0687 Claims about present perceived objects can be verified in that one can, with some certainty, know that one is physically seeing an object and, since it is actually present before one, therefore, can be tested for reliability. It remains to give consideration to his account of past perceived objects and to investigate whether Augustine felt there to be a valid method of verifying these.

0688 To this end, it will firstly be necessary to briefly refer to Augustine's concept of the inner-word and its relationship to the memory-image.

ipsa enim phantasia eius [Carthaginis] in memoria mea uerbum eius, non sonus iste trisyllabus cum Carthago nominatur, uel etiam tacite nomen ipsum per spatia temporum cogitatur; sed illud quod in animo meo cerno, cum hoc trisyllabum uoce profero, uel antequam proferam.

(*trin.* 8.9)

The knowledge which lies latent in the human mind can be actualised via the inner-word as visible and articulate memory-image and as articulate word. These memory-images are an accessible form of articulate thought and are also, therefore, word-

⁴⁵³ "quid? cum ipsa memoria perdit aliquid, sicut fit, cum obliuiscimur et quaerimus, ut recordemur." (*conf.* 10.28).

potentials⁴⁵⁴, which can be employed as the verbal word. As Bubacz states (1975, 191), this amounts to an analysis of meaning in that the inner-word, as actualisation of memory-image, is in effect the meaning of the outer word.

quisquis igitur potest intelligere uerbum, non solum antequam sonet, uerum etiam antequam sonorum eius imagines cogitatione uoluantur: hoc enim est quod ad nullam pertinet linguam...necesse est enim cum uerum loquimur, id est, quod scimus loquimur, ex ipsa scientia quam memoria tenemus, nascatur uerbum quod eiusmodi sit omnino, cuiusmodi est illa scientia de qua nascitur. formata quippe cogitatio ab ea re quam scimus, uerbum est quod in corde dicimus: quod nec graecum est, nec latinum, nec linguae alicuius alterius; sed cum id opus est in eorum quibus loquimur perferre notitiam, aliquod signum quo significetur assumitur.

(*trin.* 15.19)

In this process memory plays a central role in that it is an intermediary, in perception as well as in language. It is, therefore, of little surprise that the process of memory recall is described in linguistic terms, that is to say, with reference to an inner-word which has an "...essential function...in *all* acts of remembering" (O'Daly: 1987, 141). The inner-word is not merely a means of accessing latent images so as to render them available for expression in language but is essential for rendering any memory-image articulate. Therefore, through a consideration of the analysis of linguistic processes as expressed in the *de dialectica* can one more clearly understand the application of the 'linguistic metaphor' (O'Daly: 1987, 141) used by Augustine in his treatment of memory and memory recall. Of particular importance to this issue is the passage on signification (in the DD) where it is stated that:

quidquid autem ex verbo non aures sed animus sentit et ipso animo tenetur inclusum, dicibile uocatur. cum uero uerbum procedit non propter se sed propter aliud aliquid significandum, dictio uocatur. res autem ipsa, quae iam uerbum non est neque uerbi in mente conceptio, siue habeat uerbum quo significari possit, siue non habeat, nihil aliud quam res uocatur proprio iam

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. the articulated memory-image with the Stoic λογικαὶ φαντασίαι in that both are rational impressions (the Stoic concept being corporeal, while for Augustine this is not so) which can be presented linguistically by means of the *dicibile* and λεκτόν respectively.

nomine...quod dixi dicibile, uerbum est, nec tamen uerbum, sed quod in uerbo intellegitur et animo continetur, significat.
(dial. 5.50-62)

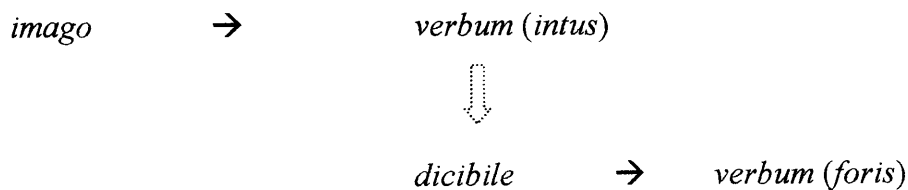
The *dicibile* is a non-verbal word; a ‘*uerbi in mente conceptio*’ which is available to be employed as a verbal expression. That is,

cum animo [uerba] sensa sunt, ante uocem dicibilia erunt; cum autem propter id quod dixi proruperunt in uocem, dictiones factae sunt.
(dial. 5.73-76)

This amounts to a word-potential in that it is a non-vocalised thought which is, nevertheless, available as a verbal expression. It need not be utilised verbally, but is always available as a verbal entity.

0689 The *dicibile* depends upon one’s knowledge which is gained from sense perception and makes possible the expression of this knowledge in language. One’s latent knowledge, insofar as it is accessible as an articulate and significant memory-image, can be expressed verbally in that it has a corresponding *dicibile*. The image, therefore, is both rational in its structure and has a verbal potentiality⁴⁵⁵. The actual/potential relation of the inner word which actualises a latent memory image (or form), to the *dicibile* which actualises the verbal word is as follows: the inner word actualises a latent memory image as a formed thought, and this formed thought has a linguistic correlate which is the *dicibile* which in turn actualises the verbal word.

(D33)



0690 In acts of perception there is an inherent rational structure to the image which means that it can be presented linguistically and has propositional content. Although there need not be an accompanying linguistic expression, the potential is inherent in the very nature of the image. Any such image will have one, or indeed many linguistic correlates; for example, 'Carthage' will also have the correlate 'city'. As suggested by O'Daly (1987, 142), the *dicibile* may actually have just such a 'generic semantic function' which allows the identification of both particular things and other things of similar type. This 'generic semantic function' arises from the formal nature of mentally accessible items. That is to say, just as an image will have one or more linguistic correlates, so too for any *dicibile* there may be any number of possible images, so that even though different people may have different thoughts there will still be a general, objective *dicibile* to correlate to the image 'city' for example.

0691 In a comparison of memory acts with the linguistic model the comprehension of a word's meaning parallels the act of perceiving an object; the storing of it as a *dicibile* parallels that of storing a memory image; and the expression of it as a *dictio* parallels that of the act of recollection. Such a comparison would appear to support a view where memory acts are essentially meaningful and objective. In contrast to this apparently remains DM 39 in that in claims made about past perceived objects one is the only witness of one's image and although the claim may have a general significance the question remains as to how it can be validated and thus confirmed as objective.

0692 Unlike claims concerning present objects there is no obvious object of reference for claims about past perceived objects, and to understand how such claims

⁴⁵⁵ The use of 'potential' should be qualified here in that the *dicibile* makes it possible for a verbalised word to have meaning, but is not itself something which can actually become a spoken word (as an Aristotelian reading of the potential/actual relation would imply).

can be seen to fit to a general schema for knowledge claims there will now finally be a consideration of the context within which DM 39 occurs.

0693 The DM is essentially concerned with language and what role, if any, it plays in the process of learning. In the course of this investigation two major issues arise: that of what it is that words refer to and how it is possible to transfer this information. The second issue arising from the first in that Augustine takes the line that there is a difficulty in transferral of information due to the fact that one must necessarily have access to the object under discussion for there to be truly meaningful discourse. This can perhaps best be seen with reference to the example of ‘*sarabarae*’ (DM 35) in that for one to accurately know what is being spoken of when someone says ‘*sarabarae*’ one must have seen this object oneself. In his analysis of language (DD 5), Augustine understands any meaningful linguistic act (*dictio*) as involving a threefold distinction: firstly, the spoken word (*verbum*); secondly, that which the spoken word signifies (*dicibile*); and thirdly, the material reality to which the signification refers (*res*). The DM in effect adds to this analysis that for one to understand what is signified by the *verbum* one must possess the *dicibile*, and to possess the *dicibile* one must have had direct access to the *res*. The point being that unless one has, or has had, access to the objects referred to then, strictly speaking, there can be no transfer of meaning. Therefore, there can in fact be no transfer of knowledge at all, for either one knows what a word means or one does not (DM 33).

0694 It should be said that Augustine is not denying the possibility of any meaningful transfer of information: his theory of language and the role of the *dicibile* in allowing one to discuss general terms would argue against this. However, with specific regard to the possibility of *learning* and gaining knowledge from another’s words it is another question altogether. It is possible for one to discuss a city, for

example, which one has never before seen in general terms as a city; but to discuss a specific city, Alexandria for example, one must either have had direct experience of it oneself (that is, have been there) or one must believe the words of another. This can be seen to provide one with information to some extent, but one's understanding and grasp of the word 'Alexandria' remains somewhat vague and dependent upon another's reliability until one directly experiences the city oneself.

0695 In DM 39 the major emphasis rests upon the person who has no direct access to images of what is discussed and in this respect can only believe the words of one who does possess the images; to this extent the images being '*nobis...documenta*' (DM 39). One cannot transfer these *documenta*, and one only knows that, for example, the word '*sarabara*' is the thing, *sarabara*, when one sees a *sarabara*; to this extent Augustine is following a priority of knowledge developed throughout the dialogue: that of object over word. Language is presented as being a meaningful method of transfer of known information but not, strictly, of the teaching of new information.

hinc est quod a prima aetate caeci, cum de luce coloribusque interrogantur, quid respondeant non inueniunt. non enim coloratas ullas patiuntur imagines, qui senserunt nullas.

(ep. 7.6)

If one has absolutely no experience of something then one can have no concept of what that thing is. The DM develops the point in that one cannot then learn this thing through words. So with possession of images one at least has a standard by which to judge another's words, which is more satisfactory than trusting completely in others. One's images are *documenta* which can be judged inwardly through one's reason, not merely by belief about objects of which one has no experience.

0696 When one speaks about something which one has personal experience of one has one's own means, though not infallible, of testing another's words. Indeed, when

it is about something not personally confirmable, such as a historical story (DM 37), one must depend on authority and belief. Yet simply because Augustine defends the position that to possess one's own *documenta* as a means of verifying another's speech is preferable to possessing no image and thus relying entirely upon the other's words, this does not imply that one's *documenta* are not themselves open to testing. In fact, it would seem that the general development of the passage tends to imply the opposite.

0697 Augustine's choice of the word *documentum*⁴⁵⁶ deserves a brief consideration for it would actually tend to point towards memory-images being verifiable, or at least potentially so, rather than simply being private, inner, proofs. 'Proof' indeed would appear to be the most suitable translation given the context in the DM, Augustine's common use of the term⁴⁵⁷, and Hus' conclusion that: *documentum*, in the period studied, "... conserve ainsi toujours, de Plaute a l'époque d'Hadrien, une réelle unité, ses différents sens étant en réalité des nuances..." (Hus: 1965, 360) and that it serves "...d'exemple, de leçon, de témoignage, de preuve..." (Hus: 1965, 378). It is further stated that "...les caractéristiques de *documentum* sont les suivantes: 1. Le *documentum* est toujours quelque chose d'exemplaire, sortant du commun. 2. Le *documentum* vise toujours a docere, qu'il s'agisse d'instruire, d'éclairer ou de prouver. 3. Le *documentum* n'est jamais un objet impersonnel, mais presque toujours un être humain ou un acte, un événement, une situation mettant en cause des êtres humains." (Hus: 1965, 360), which would all accord well with the passage in the DM in that it is an instructive example, relating to the human domain and functions so as to prove something, or put it to the test. Taken that it "...n'est jamais une <preuve>, constatation étonnante a priori..." (Hus: 1965, 360) it would appear that the sense of

⁴⁵⁶ '*Documentum*' has a range of meanings from 'example' to 'instruction' and in later Latin also included such meanings as 'evidence' and 'document' - cf. L-S; *OLD*; and *TLL* 2, 144.

the word tends towards something that by its very nature can be put to the test itself. In this context the force of “*nobis..documenta*” (DM 39) would appear to refer to their essentially inner nature and not to any lack of possibility for being verified. It would then seem that for any given situation, when individual *x* has *documenta*, *y* has *documenta*, and *z* has no *documenta*; that these *documenta* cannot be transferred to *z*, thereby giving *z* a less firm standard by which to judge *x*’s account of the situation. Yet, if *y* does have *documenta* by which to judge *x*’s words then clearly *x* can also make use of *y*’s recollection of the situation so as to validate his own recollection and to further strengthen his belief based on both memory-image and external verification. By the very introduction of a second witness in possession of his own *documentum* Augustine implies the possibility for the testing of one’s *documenta*.

*is enim qui audit, si ea sensit atque fuit, non discit meis uerbis, sed
recognoscit ablatis secum et ipse imaginibus; si autem illa non sensit, quis
non eum credere potius uerbis quam discere intellegat?*
(39)

0698 Of utmost importance in any consideration of Augustine’s position on knowledge claims and their verifiability is the fact that, in the final analysis, Augustine held the sensible world to be changeable and therefore, to this extent, false. So in the strictest sense, one can have no true knowledge of the sensible world but can have, as it were, a worldly knowledge which would serve for practical purposes in daily existence. This distinction in types of knowledge is seen in the distinction between ‘*sapientia*’ (knowledge as understood in its strict sense) and ‘*scientia*’ (knowledge of mutable world) in the *de trinitate*.

*cum enim neglecta caritate sapientiae, quae semper eodem modo manet,
concupiscitur scientia ex mutabilium temporaliumque experimento...*
(*trin.* 12.16)

⁴⁵⁷ v. *sup.* 0660 n.442.

Although *scientia* is not perhaps strictly knowledge in the same sense as *sapientia*, Augustine nevertheless holds it to be a sort of knowledge all the same, for he “...rejected the basic tenet that only indubitable knowledge is admissible as knowledge” (Markus in Armstrong: 1967, 370)⁴⁵⁸. This said, it is as the foundation for this *scientia* that memory-images would appear to function, they are the source of knowledge of the sensible world.

*nullus enim eis [sensibilibus corporalibusque] uti posset etiam bene, nisi
sensarum rerum imagines memoria tenerentur.*
(*trin.* 11.8)

This type of knowledge is, in effect, belief, but Augustine accepts belief as a valid means of acquiring knowledge and “...extends⁴⁵⁹ the domain of belief at the expense of that of knowledge” (Rist: 1994, 74).

*sed absit a nobis ut ea quae per sensus corporis didicimus, uera esse
dubitemus: per eos quippe didicimus coelum et terram, et ea qui in eis nota
sunt nobis, quantum ille qui et nos et ipsa condidit, innotescere nobis uoluit.
absit etiam ut scire nos negemus, quae testimonio didicimus aliorum: alioquin
esse nescimus Oceanum; nescimus esse terras atque urbes, quas celeberrima
fama commendat; nescimus fuisse homines et opera eorum, quae historica
lectione didicimus; nescimus quae quotidie undecumque nuntiantur, et indiciis
consonis contestantibusque firmantur; postremo nescimus in quibus locis, uel
ex quibus hominibus fuerimus exorti; quae haec omnia testimoniis credidimus
aliorum. quod si absurdissimum est dicere; non solum nostrorum, uerum
etiam et alienorum corporum sensus plurimum addidisse nostrae scientiae
confitendum est.*
(*trin.* 15.21)

One depends to a great degree on the reports of others for one's beliefs, but these reports can be confirmed by “...*indiciis consonis contestantibusque*”. The implication is clearly that to strengthen one's beliefs one must confirm them by reference to other's words, and other's words by reference to reality. In the DM the focus is upon the fact that if something is not, or has not been, directly experienced one has a weaker basis for belief, and that there is a close relation between sensible experience

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. *de trinitate* 15.21-22.

and one's learning about it. However, with the introduction of a second percipient into the discussion in DM 39 it seems clear that one who does have *scientia* (that is memory-images) can, and should, confirm it by "*indiciis consonis contestantibusque*". Indeed, the end of the above passage (*trin.* 15.21) stresses the importance of others' senses for the increase in one's knowledge, or rather, belief.

0699 In this light it would appear that the cross-reference and confirmation of past perceived objects are of importance in increasing and verifying one's beliefs.

Verification is in this sense rather less stringent than would hold for knowledge in its strictest sense, but one must understand it within the framework of his epistemology and with regard to the role of belief within this epistemology.

0700 In such terms should the introduction of the second percipient in DM 39 be understood. Granted that whether two, or two hundred, people compare memory-images it still remains problematic that what are being compared are images.

However, insofar as the greater the agreement and the firmer the authority of the witnesses that support the grounds for one's belief, to this extent does Augustine accept the verification as granting a sort of knowledge which is both practical and necessary for worldly existence.

9.3.2. Intelligibilia.

0701 The difficulties encountered for *sensibilia* are absent for *intelligibilia* for, as items of knowledge, *intelligibilia* are always, potentially immediate. Intelligible items are perceived by the mind (*mente conspicimus*), by means of the intellect (*intellectu*) and reason (*ratione*), and when such items are spoken of they are immediately

⁴⁵⁹ That is, extends with regard to the general Platonic position concerning knowledge and belief, to which he broadly adheres.

perceived (*praesentia contuemur*) in the inner light of truth (*in illa interiore luce ueritatis*). That is to say, they are made intelligible, or available to the mind, through Christ (v. *sup.* § 9.2). Through the inner light of truth, by which one grasps intelligible items through understanding and reasoning, the inner person (*homo interior*) is illuminated (*illustratur*) and achieves delight (*fruitur*).

Aug. ...cum uero de his agitur, quae mente conspiciamus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur, quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce ueritatis, qua ipse, qui dicitur homo interior, illustratur et fruitur...
(40)⁴⁶⁰

0702 Items which are perceived in the inner light of truth (*quae... contuemur in illa interiore luce ueritatis*) are such as are perceived in the mind (*quae mente conspiciamus*), which is to say, they are items which are understood and rationally grasped (*id est intellectu atque ratione*). There has been a gradual development in the dialogue, in the search for how knowledge is acquired, from language, through sensible experience, to, finally, mental comprehension. This progression is most succinctly described by the movement from learning by acts of signification ('*significatu*', DM 8), through the dismissal of this for that by acts of seeing ('*aspectu*', DM 35), and to dismissal of seeing for learning by means of the act of understanding ('*intellectu*', DM 40). This is not to entirely dismiss all acts of signifying or seeing but rather stresses the relative importance of such acts when considered in conjunction with understanding. Both signification and seeing (and all sensible acts) provide useful and valid forms of belief which may be applied so as to arrive at understanding. Principle P₁ (DM 25, 0503), which has been applied

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. "sat est enim ad id, quod uolo, Platonem sensisse duos esse mundos, unum intellegibilem, in quo ipsa ueritas habitaret, istum autem sensibilem, quem manifestum est nos uisu tactuque sentire; itaque illum uerum, hunc ueri similem et ad illius imaginem factum, et ideo de illo in ea quae se cognosceret anima uelut expoliri et quasi serenari ueritatem, de hoc autem in stultorum animis non scientiam sed opinionem posse generari..." *Acad.* 3.37.

extensively in the latter part of the dialogue (*v. sup.* § 6 and § 7), is once again applicable.

P₁ If *x* exists on account of *y*, then *y* is of more value than *x*.

The focus rests upon the fact that both signification and (sensible) perception are acts which exist on account of understanding, or knowledge. Both are used so as to achieve, or at least assist in achieving, understanding. It is this understanding which may finally accomplish the end which can be enjoyed (*fruitur*). The *uti/frui* distinction (*v. sup.* 0520-0524) is relevant at this point for Augustine signals the end towards which the other useful acts (of signifying and seeing) have led with the only use of the word (*frui*) in the dialogue. It is truth which is that which illuminates and is to be enjoyed by the inner person and this is only finally achieved through understanding, that is through reason and through the granting of the whole item of knowledge through the Inner Christ. The term '*uti*' occurs variously throughout the dialogue but, significantly, only with regard to those forms of testimony which are in themselves insufficient for knowledge: signs and words (often with reference to teaching) - DM 6, 9, 26, 41, 46⁴⁶¹; authority - DM 14; and sensible items (for the purpose of understanding) - DM 39.

0703 All items, if they are to finally constitute knowledge, must be understood rationally by the inner person. One may use various forms of testimony, whether it be direct sensible experience, recalled sensible experience, or testimony from others, both historical (through the authority of texts) and direct, from personal communicative interaction. However, there is the necessary process of personal, internal reasoning and understanding so as to finally move properly towards knowledge.

⁴⁶¹ The 'usefulness' of speech (and signs) will be commented upon in due course (*v. inf.* § 11).

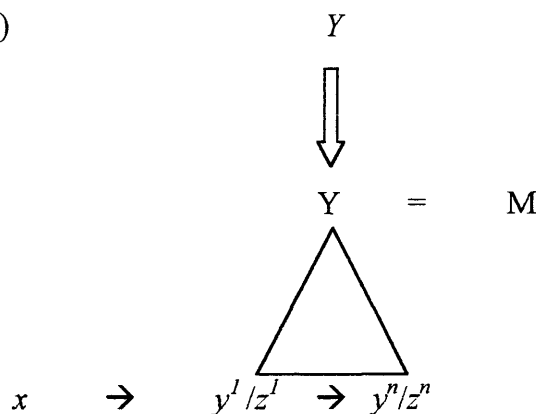
0704 Intelligible items which are seen by the mind are understood and rationally grasped, however, only in the interior light of truth.

Aug. ... quae mente conspicimus, id est intellectu atque ratione... praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce ueritatis...
(40)

The metaphor is of a person with functioning sight, who is in a room filled with objects, but must wait for the light to be turned on before either the items or the interrelations between them can be perceived. The truth, or Christ, is that light and the knowledge which any person can gain is, in the final analysis, a revealed knowledge. Augustine's ascent to knowledge is, in the DM, a Plotinian ascent with the final gap to be bridged, in the Paradox of Enquiry, being achieved only through divine revelation.

0705 This gap is that which was highlighted in discussion of D29 (0540-0541).

(D29.1)



Namely, although one has a grasp of a concept, Y, this does not constitute knowledge of the Transcendental Form, Y.

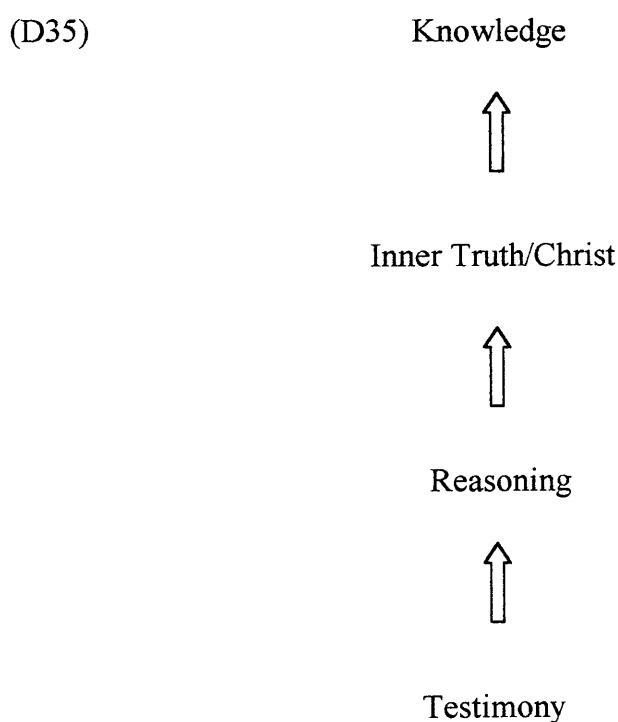
0706 Indeed, either in gaining firm knowledge of an individual item, that is, grasping the Form intellectually, or in gaining a full understanding of any field of knowledge, there is the question of how one progresses ultimately from an inductive, or a general grasp of an item or a field of knowledge to a valid, secure, and specific grasp of this said knowledge. For Augustine this entails a movement from a

conceptual grasp of any item to a formal awareness of it, or from a degree of understanding of any field to a full understanding. Such complete knowledge is, strictly, the only form of true knowledge in Augustine's analysis and the movement from partial, human, understanding, to full understanding is achievable only through divine grace. The direction of motion from *Y* to an understanding of *Y*, which can fully constitute knowledge, is downwards.



A person may employ various modes of testimony and apply intelligence towards an understanding of any item or field of knowledge, yet the gap between belief and full knowledge must, in Augustine's analysis, be bridged only by an intellectual clarification, as it were, through Christ as mediator.

0707 The movement for the individual is from data, which relies on testimony, through reasoning, and then via divine illumination to knowledge.



0708 When one converses with someone who understands intelligible items, this person perceives these items with his own private (*secreto*) and simple (*simplici*) eye and, therefore, has knowledge not through words but through his own contemplation (*sua contemplatione*).

Aug. ...sed tum quoque noster auditor, si et ipse illa secreto ac simplici oculo uidet, nouit quod dico sua contemplatione, non uerbis meis.

(40)

0709 That the person's eye is described as private (*secreto*) clarifies the fact that it is only accessible for the individual in his inner self and is not verifiable to another. Also, the use of the term 'simple' (*simplici*) focuses upon the direct, immediate, and unqualified mode of access which the knower has to the item of knowledge, while the use of the term 'contemplation' (*contemplatione*)⁴⁶² stresses the complete nature of the knowledge which such an individual may possess.

0710 Even in a situation where the speaker is stating something true and the listener is perceiving this truth, the speaker's words do not teach the listener. The truth is here perceived by the items being made apparent (... *ipsis rebus... manifestis*) through divine disclosure (... *deo intus pandente...*). It is due to this disclosure that one such an individual is able to respond when questioned.

Aug. ...ergo ne hunc quidem doceo uera dicens uera intuentem; docetur enim non uerbis meis, sed ipsis rebus deo intus pandente manifestis; itaque de his etiam interrogatus respondere posset.

(40)

0711 Augustine is thinking of the slave in Plato's *Meno* (82b-85b)⁴⁶³, who is able to answer when he is questioned (*interrogatus respondere posset*) not on account of Socrates' words (*docetur... non uerbis meis*) but, according to Augustine's thesis, due

⁴⁶² The sense of a complete knowledge of this sort is essentially Plotinian 'θεωρία' (cf. Plotinus 1.1-8). The idea of this as the highest category of knowledge, at least potentially, is suggested by Aristotle (*metaph.* 989b).

⁴⁶³ Cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.57-58.

to the truth being disclosed to him by God (... *vera intuentem... ipsis rebus deo intus pandente manifestis...*)⁴⁶⁴.

0712 The idea of intellectual disclosure by God relates to the intelligible world where one grasps *a priori* truths⁴⁶⁵ and where knowledge actually moves beyond reasoning and involves intuition. However, the grasping of truth is, in the final analysis, always intuitive.

audiam et intellegam, quomodo «in principio» fecisti «caelum et terram»⁴⁶⁶. scripsit hoc Moyses, scripsit et abiit, transiit hinc a te ad te neque nunc ante me est. nam si esset, tenerem eum et rogarem eum et per te obsecrarem, ut mihi ista panderet, et praeberem aures corporis mei sonis erumpentibus ex ore eius, et si Hebraea uoce loqueretur, frustra pulsaret sensum meum nec inde mentem meam quidquam tangeret; si autem Latine, scirem quid diceret. sed unde scirem, an uerum diceret? quod si et hoc scirem, num ab illo scirem? intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis nec Hebraea nec Graeca nec Latina nec barbara ueritas sine oris et linguae organis, sine strepitu syllabarum diceret: uerum dicit et ego statim certus confidenter illi homini tuo dicerem: uerum dicis. cum ergo illum interrogare non possim, te, quo plenus uera dixit, ueritas, rogo, te, deus meus, rogo, «parce peccatis meis»⁴⁶⁷, et qui illi seruo tuo dedisti haec dicere, da et mihi haec intellegere.
(*conf.* 11.5)

The grasping of the truth of anything is described as though truth itself ('*ueritas*') were the assenting agent ('... *diceret: uerum dicit*'). The model here is that of the human will's assenting, propositionally, to an impression⁴⁶⁸. However, the assent actually arises from the truth itself and is the basis of the act of assent to any true impression.

⁴⁶⁴ *trin.* 12.24 suggests that Augustine was unaware of what questions Socrates actually put to the slave. Augustine's knowledge of the *Meno* most likely comes from Cicero, and at any rate he is not directly familiar with the original text.

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. "*nam in illo libro, qui inscribitur Μένων, pusionem quendam Socrates interrogat quaedam geometrica de dimensione quadrati...ex quo effici uult Socrates ut discere nihil aliud sit nisi recordari...nec uero fieri ullo modo posse ut a pueris tot rerum atque tantarum insitas et quasi consignatas in animis notiones, quas ἐννοίας uocant, haberemus...*" Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.57

⁴⁶⁶ Gen. 1:1.

⁴⁶⁷ Job 14:16.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Stoic καταληπτικαὶ φαντασίαι (Sextus Empiricus, *M.* 7.248) and assent to such impressions (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.145).

0713 The person who has intelligible truths available to her is in no way taught by another's words but rather could in fact answer questions about these matters if questioned about them.

Aug. ...quid autem absurdius quam eum putare locutione mea doceri, qui posset, antequam loquerer, ea ipse interrogatus exponere?
(40)

This is the point which the slave experiment in Plato's *Meno* (82b-85b) attempted to demonstrate. Yet it is clear that one often denies something and only after further questioning comes to admit the truth of it. This does not, apparently, reveal a weakness in the thesis here presented but rather reveals that here is a weakness in one's intellectual 'vision' (*imbecillitate cernentis*). This weakness, which signals some degree of intellectual elitism⁴⁶⁹, is due to the lack of ability to perceive the whole thing through the light of truth (*de re tota lucem consulere non potest*).

Aug. ... quod saepe contingit, ut interrogatus aliquid neget atque ad id fatendum aliis interrogationibus urgeatur, fit hoc imbecillitate cernentis, qui de re tota illam lucem consulere non potest...
(40)

0714 The truth is available to the individual but on account of a lack of discernment the person cannot grasp the whole thing as a unity, or as an interrelated whole. Such an individual is assisted in coming to a full understanding by being reminded (*admonetur*) of the individual parts (*de istis partibus*) and in this way is able to gradually grasp the parts which ultimately make up the whole (*partibus... quibus illa summa constat, quam totam cernere non ualebat*).

Aug. ...quod ut partibus faciat, admonetur, cum de istis partibus interrogatur, quibus illa summa constat, quam totam cernere non ualebat.
(40)

⁴⁶⁹ This elitism is such as to imply a denial of non-intellectual access to the divine and is characteristic of the young, more Neoplatonic, Augustine. For a discussion of this Neoplatonic aspect of Augustine in contrast to later Pauline aspects, with regards to the reception of Augustine in the Renaissance, cf. Bergvall: 2001.

Augustine's analysis of Recollection can in this sense be seen as a mental event whereby latent *a priori* truths are accessed through the reconsideration and conceptual re-ordering of factors which depend upon these truths. That is to say, one has latent mathematical information, for example, accessible to the mind, and perhaps upon the basis of which one often makes judgements, but one is not actually aware of this information. However, when one considers a series of items, such as the geometrical experiment in Plato's *Meno* (82b-85b), one may, through these prompts, grasp the wider implications of the experiment and recall, as it were, the *a priori* truths which one in fact already had access to.

0715 Words may be used in such a case as prompts or directional aids (*uerbis perducitur*), they do not, however, teach but simply raise questions in such a way as to allow the person who is questioned to put discrete pieces of information together. This discrete information was already known, or available to the person, and by putting it together, or re-ordering it, he may grasp the connectedness of these items and the implications of this connectedness. This understanding is also dependent upon the ability of the person to understand for himself, and his ability to be properly illuminated by the truth.

Aug. ...si uerbis perducitur eius, qui interrogat, non tamen docentibus uerbis, sed eo modo inquirentibus, quo modo est ille, a quo quaeritur, intus discere idoneus.

(40)

In such a way Augustine both demonstrates the wider thesis of the DM and presents an argument for the effectiveness, and usefulness, of dialectic. While it is absolutely clear that there is, in its strict sense, no other teacher than Christ, for no individual person can cause another to understand what he does not, nevertheless, in the DM as a

whole there is presented a demonstration of one human teaching another⁴⁷⁰. Augustine has assisted Adeodatus in coming to an understanding for himself by a series of well directed questions which have enabled Adeodatus to disambiguate the topic under discussion and to re-order information which he has already within himself. Through this process Adeodatus has been able to discover the wider whole, through an analysis of the parts⁴⁷¹.

0716 The Birdcatcher is also relevant to this for it is clear that when one has all of the information available to one, that is, all of the equipment for birdcatching, one does not have knowledge beyond those discrete items. Knowledge of birdcatching depends upon one observing the process which connects these parts together and through this process one may come to understand birdcatching. However, as is pointed out, one still needs to apply one's intelligence so as to properly have knowledge of birdcatching and clearly some may be better able to do this than others.

0717 Augustine highlights the fact that the dialogue has been a demonstration of its own thesis by introducing the topic which has been under discussion, and the manner in which it has been discussed, as a defence of the fact that one may be led to an understanding of something through being questioned about its parts.

Aug. ... uelut si abs te quaererem hoc ipsum quod agitur, utrumnam uerbis doceri nihil possit, et absurdum tibi primo uideretur non ualenti totum conspicere, sic ergo quaerere oportuit, ut tuae sese uires habent ad audiendum illum intus magistrum...

(40)

0718 The implication, in certain contexts, that one learns from another's words is false for one can actually be seen to be more involved in the process than might be the case if one were simply receiving information and accepting it. The statement that one

⁴⁷⁰ That the DM is in fact a demonstration of the thesis it proposes is signalled from the outset: "*Aug. ... at ego puto esse quoddam genus docendi per commemorationem, magnum sane, quod in hac nostra sermocinatione res ipsa indicabit*" (1).

⁴⁷¹ Cf. Plato, *Tht.* 203c-208b.

has seen a flying man is less readily accepted than the statement that wise men are better than fools.

Aug. ... ut dicerem: ea quae me loquente uera esse confiteris et certus es et te illa nosse confirmas, unde didicisti? responderes fortasse, quod ego docuisssem. tum ego subnecterem: quid si me hominem uolantem uidisse dicerem, itane te certum uerba mea redderent, quemadmodum si audires sapientes homines stultis esse meliores?

(40)

In such a context it is clear that one either does not believe the former statement, that there was a flying man, or at least that one does not know it, even if one believed it. The latter statement, that wise men are better than fools, however, is felt to be known with certainty⁴⁷². From this it can be seen that one has not learned anything from the words for either one does not know (as in the former example) or one knows (as in the latter).

Aug. ... negares profecto et responderes illud te non credere aut etiamsi crederes ignorare, hoc autem certissime scire. ex hoc iam nimirum intellegeres neque in illo, quod me affirmante ignorares, neque in hoc, quod optime scires, aliquid te didicisse uerbis meis, quandoquidem etiam interrogatus de singulis et illud ignotum et hoc tibi notum esse iurares.

(40)

0719 Through a correct analysis of the parts one can come to accept for oneself, and understand for oneself, the whole which one may previously have denied. This fact has been demonstrated by the dialogue as a whole for Adeodatus' initial response to Augustine's question as to the purpose of speech was that through words one teaches or learns ("*aut docere aut discere*" DM 1), whereas he now accepts the thesis that nothing is learned (or taught) through words.

Aug. ...tum uero totum illud, quod negaueras, fatereris, cum haec, ex quibus constat, clara et certa esse cognosceres, omnia scilicet, quae loquimur, aut ignorare auditorem, utrum uera sint, aut falsa esse non ignorare aut scire uera esse.

(40)

⁴⁷² The certainty of the truth of this statement is apparently felt to be so obvious, and so immediately contained in the concepts, that one can judge it solely by reference to one's own reason.

0720 The whole which Adeodatus had denied has been shown through its parts.

After hearing another's statement (y) the hearer (x) has three possible relationships with the statement:

- (1) x does not know whether y is true
- (2) x knows that y is false
- (3) x knows that y is true

In (1) x either believes, has an opinion about y ⁴⁷³, or doubts y ; in (2) x rejects y ; and in (3) x accepts y . In none of these situations can x be said to learn.

Aug. ...horum trium in primo aut credere aut opinari aut dubitare, in secundo aduersari atque renuere, in tertio attestari...

(40)

Therefore, it has been shown that the person who does not know (*qui post uerba nostra rem nescit*), the person who knows that he has heard a falsehood (*qui se falsa nouit audisse*), and the person who could respond with the same answers as what was said (*qui posset interrogatus eadem respondere quae dicta sunt*), have all learned nothing from the speaker's words.

Aug. ...nusquam igitur discere, quia et ille, qui post uerba nostra rem nescit, et qui se falsa nouit audisse, et qui posset interrogatus eadem respondere, quae dicta sunt, nihil uerbis didicisse conuincitur.

(40)

0721 Therefore, even with respect to intelligible items one learns nothing through another's words, for one must perceive such things also for oneself to know them. At best it is useful to believe what one does not know.

Aug. ...quam ob rem in his etiam, quae mente cernuntur frustra cernentis loquelas audit, quisquis ea cernere non potest, nisi quia talia quamdiu ignorantur utile est credere.

(41)

⁴⁷³ Cf. *util. cred.* 25.

The person who, on the other hand, is able to perceive such things can be said to be a student of truth within (*intus est discipulus ueritatis*) while outwardly such a person is a judge of a speaker or rather of what is said.

Aug. ...quisquis autem cernere potest, intus est discipulus ueritatis, foris iudex loquentis uel potius ipsius locutionis...

(41)

The teacher is truth and the student is one who learns inwardly through gaining an understanding of any object of knowledge. By means of such inner understanding one is able to make judgements on the truth or falsity of the statements of others.

Augustine's position can be seen to have attempted a move towards a solution of the Paradox, and of the linguistic model of the Paradox as presented by Wittgenstein, and there has been considerable advance in the understanding of the problem at hand.

However, it must be said that the final movement from the position of ignorance to knowledge is still not broached other than through the intervention of an unexplained force, namely the divine, in the person of Christ. The gap between the independent, objective world and the thinking subject is left, and the means of bridging it left obscure and mysterious. It should be said that Augustine pushes the argument to its extreme and does not merely presuppose that a child, or one in a position of ignorance⁴⁷⁴, already has certain concepts as a foundation for knowledge acquisition (and for language acquisition). What he does presuppose is that there are real objects, or items of knowledge, which are such as to be available to the human mind; and one would expect this of one who holds with what is a fundamentally Platonic metaphysics. However, Augustine's solution to the ultimate means of passing from a position of ignorance to a position of understanding and of grasping such real items is reliant on the divine and is, as such, necessarily mysterious and therefore

⁴⁷⁴ This, in fact, includes all of humanity.

unsatisfactory. The analysis presented by Augustine takes it that there are real objects and that one has access to these objects so as to form concepts and so as to enable one to grasp the meaning of linguistic expressions. For there to be a valid model for knowledge acquisition and concept formation, and for language acquisition, it must be compatible with the metaphysical viewpoint taken by Augustine. The means whereby this is achieved basically lacks explanatory force, for the explanation is the divine.

10. Speaker's Word and Speaker's Mind.

0722 Augustine now turns to the relation between the words of a speaker and the speaker's thoughts, or intentions in speaking. This finally allows a consideration of commemorative signs. It has been argued above that the idea of recall, or recollection, both with regards to words and with regards to mental events, or items (v. *sup.* .§ 8.1.5 and § 9.3.1, 0661 ff.), is an Augustinian treatment of the Platonic concept of ἀνάμνησις. In both of these contexts words function as recall items which remind the hearer or, perhaps better, prompt the hearer to recall information. There is no sense in which the words, *qua* reminders, function as evidence. Recollection, or commemoration, as a theory of reminding as the reaccessing of latent, and potentially available, information is the central treatment of ἀνάμνησις in the DM. However, this treatment is from the point of view of the hearer in relation to the information and in relation to the hearer's mind. That is to say, the analysis focuses upon the word which is heard and how it relates to the hearer's inner, intellectual, processes: individual, *x*, may hear a word, *y*, which reminds *x* of concept *z*. The relation concerns the hearer, *x*, the word, *y*, and the concept, *z*, which *y* signifies for *x*.

0723 Augustine now turns to the further element involved in the process, namely the speaker. The speaker also has concepts, which his words signify, and intentions, which are enacted in uttering the words. It is the relation between the words, the hearer, and the speaker's mind or intentions which will now be considered. Words are signs which show what the speaker is thinking, or at least what he wants the hearer to think of and in this sense they function, it would appear, as a sort of evidence. It is, therefore, in the relation of speaker's words to speaker's mind, as received and

understood by hearer, that Augustine's approach is closest to the idea of words as evidential, or commemorative, signs (σημεῖα ὑπομνηστικά).

0724 Due to the focus of the dialogue upon how one can acquire knowledge and the role of language, if any, in this process, the direction of study has been from transmitter through sign to receiver.

(D36)

transmitter → sign → receiver

Augustine now turns briefly to the opposite direction, namely, from receiver through word to transmitter.

0725 The efficacy of words as commemorative signs will therefore depend upon their ability to accurately communicate the thoughts and intentions of the speaker. In Augustine's approach to language acquisition it has been seen that one gains an inductive sense of what another intends by uttering a word (*v. sup.* § 8.1.3), how far this can be determined as providing evidence which gives knowledge depends upon the soundness of the sign as evidence.

10.1. Intention Failure.

0726 In the case of a person stating truths and yet being unaware that what he says is true, it seems unreasonable to hold that such a person teaches by means of his words. In such a case the speaker states truths but holds them to be false⁴⁷⁵, and yet

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. 'non enim omnis, qui falsum dicit, mentitur, si credit aut opinatur uerum esse quod dicit, inter credere autem atque opinari hoc distat, quod aliquando ille, qui credit, sentit se ignorare quod credit, quamuis de re, quam se ignorare nouit, omnino non dubitet, si eam firmissime credit. qui autem opinatur, putat se scire quod nescit. quisquis autem hoc emuntiat quod uel creditum animo uel opinatum tenet, etiamsi falsum sit, non mentitur. hoc enim debet emuntiationis suae fidei, ut illud per eam proferat, quod animo tenet, et sic habet, ut profert. nec ideo tamen sine uitio est, quamuis non

does so with exactly the same words as someone would use who does know that they are truths.

Aug. ...nam plerumque scit illa, quae dicta sunt, eo ipso nesciente, qui dixit uelut si quisquam Epicureis credens et mortalem animam putans eas rationes, quae de immortalitate eius a prudentioribus tractatae sunt, eloquatur illo audiente, qui spiritalia contueri potest, iudicat iste uera eum dicere. at ille, qui dicit, utrum uera dicat ignorat, immo etiam falsissima existimat; num igitur putandus est ea docere, quae nescit? atqui isdem uerbis utitur, quibus uti etiam sciens posset.

(41-42)

0727 When someone who speaks what is true but believes it to be false is speaking to someone who does in fact know that the speaker's words state truths, it follows that the words do not even indicate the speaker's mind. In this situation the person hearing the words, and knowing that they state the truth, judges that the speaker is stating the truth. However, the speaker does not know that he is speaking the truth. In such a situation it is clear that words do have a public, and, in a general sense, objective meaning but that this does not necessarily convey accurately the speaker's intention, or speaker's meaning. The communicative process is faulty here for the hearer in effect takes what he will from the public utterance, irrelevant of what the speaker intends and irrelevant of whether the speaker knows what he is saying or not.

Aug. ...quare iam ne hoc quidem relinquitur uerbis, ut his saltem loquentis animus indicetur, si quidem incertum est, utrum ea, quae loquitur, sciati.

(41-42)

10.2. Intentional Concealment.

0728 Related to the case of someone stating truths unintentionally, while thinking them false, is that of liars⁴⁷⁶. Liars are aware of what it is that they are stating, and

mentiat, si aut non credenda credit aut quod ignorat nosse se putat, etiamsi uerum sit. incognitum enim habet pro cognito' (mend. 3).

⁴⁷⁶ Augustine went on to discuss lying, most relevantly to the above consideration, in his *De mendacio*.

further know that it is untrue, but they state what is false as though they believed it to be true⁴⁷⁷. It is apparent that liars do not reveal what they are thinking, or what they intend, but in addition they actually attempt to conceal what they have in mind.

Aug. ...adde mentientes atque fallentes, per quos facile intellegas non modo non aperiri, uerum etiam occultari animum uerbis.

(42)

0729 If it were possible to keep liars from speaking then speakers could express their minds to some extent. In this way it is proposed that there may be the potential, given the ideal situation where no-one was a liar, for people to reveal what they have in mind. The intention of most people is to tell the truth and make their mind apparent and they do accomplish this in some way (“... *id quodam modo profiteri ut animus loquentis appareat...*”). The qualification (*quodam modo*) signals the conclusions that have been arrived at over the length of the dialogue that words signify inner events and as such cannot be truly accessed by another. However, this said, it is nevertheless ceded that there can be some level of information transfer, or of communication.

Aug. ...nam nullo modo ambigo id conari uerba ueracium et id quodam modo profiteri, ut animus loquentis appareat, quod obtinerent omnibus concedentibus, si loqui mentientibus non liceret.

(42)

10.3. Divergence in Speech and Thought.

0730 There is also the case where one says one thing while thinking another.

Aug. ...quamquam saepe experti fuerimus et in nobis et in aliis non earum rerum, quae cogitantur, uerba proferri...

(42)

In the first two examples there is a case of the speaker saying what he means but not what he intends. In the first example (§ 10.1) the speaker means to argue, for example,

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. ‘...ille mentitur, qui aliud habet in animo et aliud uerbis uel quibuslibet significationibus

that immortality is true but intends that it be understood as false. While in the second example (§ 10.2) the liar means to say what is false but intends that it be understood that he thinks it true. In both of these cases the meaning of the words are apparent but the intended reception of them or the actual intention behind them is not.

0731 In the case of saying one thing while thinking another the meaning of the words and their intention are the same, however, the words do not, at the moment of utterance, reflect the speaker's thoughts.

0732 There are two ways in which this might occur. Firstly, there is the situation where one has committed a speech to memory and has been practised to such an extent that one can think about other things while speaking. A common example of this is seen in singing.

Aug. ...cum aut sermo memoriae mandatus et saepe decursus alia cogitantis ore funditur, quod nobis cum hymnum canimus saepe contingit...
(42)

The second case is where there is a slip of the tongue. In this case there is also a contrast between meaning and intention in that one says what one did not intend and so the meaning of one's utterance is contrary to one's intention.

Aug. ...aut cum alia pro aliis uerba praeter uoluntatem nostram linguae ipsius errore prosiliunt; nam hic quoque non earum rerum signa, quas in animo habemus, audiuntur.
(42)

0733 The case of slips of the tongue raises the point that the utterance, unintentionally, does not reflect what the speaker has in mind. In the case of liars, however, the utterance, intentionally, does not reflect what they have in mind. To this extent, liars do think of what they say, however, the listener does not know whether they are speaking the truth. A liar, therefore, means what he says but intends it to be deceptive. Indeed, although the listener knows what the liar has in mind, for his words

reflect what he is thinking, the listener does not know from the words what the liar intends, namely, to be deceptive. If a liar should be thinking of something else while speaking or should experience a slip of the tongue, then he will of course not be thinking what he is saying.

Aug. ...nam mentientes quidem cogitant etiam de his rebus, quas loquuntur, ut tametsi nesciamus an uerum dicant, sciamus tamen eos in animo habere quod dicunt, si non eis aliquid duorum quae dixi accidat...

(42)

In the case of liars there is a contradiction between word meaning and speaker's intention, while in the case of slips of the tongue there is only a difference between speaker's intention and word meaning. Someone who experiences a slip of the tongue means x intends to say x but actually says y . A liar means x and intends to say x , but additionally intends that it be understood that he intends x as true while he in fact knows that actually y is true.

0734 It is clear then that there are different levels of intention in speech relating to intention of word meaning and to intention of the reception of this utterance in relation to truth and falsity.

0735 In the case of intention failure (§ 10.1):

x intends to say y and does so, but also x intends y to be understood as false, unaware that y is in fact true.

In the case of intentional concealment (§ 10.2):

x intends to say y and does so, but also x intends y to be understood as true, knowing that it is in fact false.

In the case of slips of the tongue:

x intends to say y but says z , x also intends that y be understood as true.

0736 There is clearly a distinction drawn between what one intends to say and what one intends to be understood in what one says, or in what one intends to be

understood as the intention behind one's utterance. These distinctions may be described as (1) utterance-intention, where there is a correlation between the meaning of an utterance and one's intended meaning (there is, for example, a failure in the utterance-intention with a slip of the tongue as there is a divergence between what one's words mean and what one actually meant to say; and as (2) reception-intention, where there is a correlation between one's utterance and the intention behind the reception of this utterance (there is, for, example, a failure in reception-intention in cases of intention failure as there is a divergence between the reception of one's utterance and one's intention behind the reception of this utterance - one intended it to be taken as false, for example, whereas it is in fact true and is taken as such).

10.4. Lexical Confusion.

0737 In cases where the speaker does signify what he is thinking of, the significance may only grasped by the speaker and perhaps a few others, but the person to whom he is speaking, and perhaps several others, understand a different signification in the utterance. This confusion arises essentially from the use one puts a word to and how this is understood by a particular listener.

Aug. ...sed his accedit aliud genus sane late patens et semen innumerabilium dissensionum atque certaminum, cum ille, qui loquitur, eadem quidem significat, quae cogitat, sed plerumque tantum sibi et aliis quibusdam, ei uero, cui loquitur, et item aliis nonnullis non idem significat.

(43)

0738 This confusion can be best observed by way of an example such as when someone should say: "*ab aliquibus beluis homo uirtute superatur*" ("Man is surpassed in virtue by some beasts"). In such an example the word '*uirtus*' can signify either virtue or physical strength. In such a case the confusion is not to be explained by his

lying, or by his being in error about things, or by his citing words from memory while thinking something else, or due to a slip of the tongue. The confusion lies in the fact that he is applying a different term to what he is thinking of than that which his interlocutor would apply.

Aug. ...dixerit enim aliquis audientibus nobis ab aliquibus beluis hominem uirtute superari; nos ilico ferre non possumus et hanc tam falsam pestiferamque sententiam magna intentione refellimus, cum ille fortasse uirtutem uires corporis uocet et hoc nomine id, quod cogitauit, enuntiet nec mentiatur nec erret in rebus nec aliud aliquid uoluens animo mandata memoriae uerba contexit nec linguae lapsu aliud quam uolebat sonat, sed tantummodo rem, quam cogitat, alio quam nos nomine appellat, de qua illi statim assentiremur, si eius cogitationem possemus inspicere, quam uerbis iam prolatis explicataque sententia sua nondum nobis pandere ualuit.

(43)

In such a case there would be complete agreement if only the interlocutor could, as it were, look into the speaker's mind (*si eius cogitationem possemus inspicere*).

Speaker's meaning and speaker's intention are, in the final analysis, reliant upon an internal event and, as the thrust of the argument of the DM has shown, this leads to a fundamental and unbridgeable gap in any precise understanding between interlocutors.

10.5. Definition.

0739 Definition is briefly introduced as a suggested means of combating such confusions as occur with lexical confusion. Through the definition of the word under consideration the issue would be clarified, for the confusion is over the word and not the thing.

Aug. ...huic errori definitiones mederi posse dicunt, ut in hac quaestione, si definiret, quid sit uirtus, eluceret aiunt non de re, sed de uerbo esse controuersiam...

(43)

0740 Although Augustine may concede that the confusion is over the word and not the thing, he quickly dismisses the use of definitions as a solution to this problem. The question is raised as to how many people are actually good at definitions, which implies that definitions very often introduce more problems than they solve. There are, Augustine states, many arguments against the use of definition as an approach, arguments which he does not entirely agree with, but discussion of this is passed over as unsuitable to the present discussion.

Aug. ...quod ut concedam ita esse, quotus quisque bonus definitor inueniri potest? et tamen aduersus disciplinam definiendi multa disputata sunt, quae neque hoc loco tractare opportunum est nec usquequaque a me probantur.
(43)

0741 Augustine raises a similar concern in the DD (5.12-16), where he proposes to discuss the problems of definition later in the work. Unfortunately, the section in which definitions was to be discussed was never completed. As Darrell Jackson notes (1975, 125 n.5), Capella (*nup. Phil.* 4.349) included a paragraph on definition under *de loquendo* and this may have been the section in which Augustine intended to discuss this in the DD. However, what is important is that Augustine raises the question as to whether words are correctly defined and whether the words used in definitions will themselves have to be followed by further definitions.

haec omnia quae definita sunt, utrum recte definita sint et utrum hactenus uerba definitionis aliis definitionibus persequenda fuerint, ille indicabit locus, quo definiendi disciplina tractatur.
(*dial.* 5.12-16)

This argument may lie at the heart of Augustine's dismissal of definitions, for the discussion of the DM begins with the problem of the regress of attempting to define words with words. To return to this question would be to repeat much of what has already been discussed. This, however, is not to dismiss definition as entirely useless, but in the present context and in the topic under discussion it would appear that

Augustine holds that definition does not solve the essential difficulties encountered in determining the strict relation between words and objects.

10.6. Mishearing.

0742 The final confusion to be introduced concerning confusions arising over speaker's words and speaker's thoughts is that of mishearing. Mishearing is an obvious case where confusion can arise over what is being intended by a speaker for the speaker may utter one word and the hearer may think he has heard another. Often there is not even any similarity in sound between the two mistaken words.

Aug. ...omitto, quod multa non bene audiui et quasi de auditis diu multumque contendimus, uelut tu nuper uerbo quodam Punico, cum ego misericordiam dixissem, pietatem significari te audisse dicebas ab eis, quibus haec lingua magis nota esset. ego autem resistens quid acceperis tibi omnino excidisse asserebam; uisus enim mihi eras non pietatem dixisse, sed fidem, cum et coniunctissimus mihi assideres et nullo modo haec duo nomina similitudine soni aurem decipiant. diu te tamen arbitratus sum nescire, quid tibi dictum sit, cum ego nescirem, quid dixeris; nam si te bene audissem, nequaquam mihi uideretur absurdum pietatem et misericordiam uno uocabulo Punice nominari. haec plerumque accidunt. sed ea, ut dixi, omittamus, ne calumniam uerbis de audiendi neglegentia uel etiam de surditate hominum uidear commouere.

(44)

Such cases of mishearing are more trivial than those other cases discussed above (§ 10.1 - § 10.4). These earlier examples are more problematic as the present cases where one speaks the same language as a speaker and clearly hears what is said and yet still does not know what the speaker is thinking.

Aug. ...illa magis angunt, quae superius enumeraui, ubi uerbis liquidissime aure perceptis et Latinis non ualemus, cum eiusdem linguae simus, loquentium cogitata cognoscere.

(44)

11. The Teacher.

0743 Augustine finally concedes that words, which are heard by someone who knows them, do allow this person to know that the speaker had been thinking about the things that they signify. Under these circumstances, and with the possible confusions which were discussed above (§ 10) being absent, words can function as evidential signs of what the speaker has in mind. However, in conceding this point, Augustine has not lessened the force of the primary thesis of the DM, namely that no person teaches another, for the person who has heard the words has not learned whether what is said is true.

Aug. sed ecce iam remitto atque concedo, cum uerba eius auditu, cui nota sunt, accepta fuerint, posse illi esse notum de his rebus quas significant loquentem cogitauisse; num ideo etiam, quod nunc quaeritur, utrum uera dixerit, discit?

(45)

0744 Language, therefore, does not fulfil the role which was initially proposed as its function (DM 1), namely, to teach. However, with a redefined understanding of what teaching is, language has been seen to fulfil a more limited but nevertheless useful role. Words function on the level of reminding and recalling, and so the idea of the purpose of speech rather depends on a clearer understanding of the function of words.

0745 Teachers do not pass on their thoughts for these are not what a student perceives and grasps, but rather it is the actual disciplines themselves which are presented to the student by means of language. That is to say, teachers explain the disciplines which they profess to teach and the students then judge for themselves whether what has been explained is true or not. The explaining (*explicauerint*), in accordance with the method demonstrated in the DM, would then entail demonstrating the parts of a discipline in such a way as to encourage the student to

understand the whole discipline. However, the actual act of passing judgement takes place within the student's mind and is achieved in respect of the student's ability to grasp the complete discipline in the light of truth itself.

Aug. ...num hoc magistri profitentur, ut cogitata eorum ac non ipsae disciplinae, quas loquendo se tradere putant, percipiantur atque teneantur? nam quis tam stulte curiosus est, qui filium suum mittat in scholam, ut quid magister cogitet discat? at istas omnes disciplinas, quas docere profitentur, ipsiusque uirtutis atque sapientiae cum uerbis explicauerint, tum illi, qui discipuli uocantur, utrum uera dicta sint, apud semetipsos considerant interiorem scilicet illam ueritatem pro uiribus intuentes.

(45)

0746 The point at which the students in fact learn is that at which they grasp for themselves the validity of what is being said to them. Learning is rather a process of inner discovery, or understanding. Indeed, if the teachers themselves state what is true it is only because they themselves have been taught also, for they too have been enlightened by the inner light of truth⁴⁷⁸.

Aug. ...tunc ergo discunt, et cum uera dicta esse intus inuenerint, laudant nescientes non se doctores potius laudare quam doctos, si tamen et illi quod loquuntur sciunt.

(45)

The fact that people mistakenly think that such men are teachers is due to the fact that there is no delay between the act of speech and the act of knowing. The speaker prompts the student, through reminding him, and the student quickly learns within, that is to say, he quickly understands. The person who has done the reminding, therefore, appears to have done the teaching.

Aug. ...falluntur autem homines, ut eos qui non sunt magistros uocent, quia plerumque inter tempus locutionis et tempus cognitionis nulla mora interponitur, et quoniam post admonitionem sermocinantis cito intus discunt, foris se ab eo, qui admonuit, didicisse arbitrantur.

(45)

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. *ep.* 19.1.

0747 The usefulness of words is not negligible but as Augustine has taught, that is has prompted or reminded, Adeodatus during the discussion, one should not attribute more to words than they actually accomplish. In the process involved in learning there is the necessary development where belief (plus reason) leads to understanding; where there is a role for authority; and where Christ as Inner Teacher is the criterion of truth for individual humans seeking to understand and perceive what is true.

0748 As has been demonstrated in the DM, there is a process where one moves from belief towards gaining an understanding, and this understanding leads to an acceptance of the authority of scripture, and the truth of what is stated by this authority, that there is no teacher on earth but only the divine teacher.

Aug. ...sed te tota utilitate uerborum, quae, si bene consideretur, non parua est, alias, si deus siuerit, requiremus. nunc enim ne plus eis quam oportet tribueremus, admonui te, ut iam non crederemus tantum, sed etiam intellegere inciperemus, quam uere scriptum sit auctoritate diuina, ne nobis quemquam magistrum dicamus in terris, quod unus omnium magister in caelis⁴⁷⁹ sit.

(46)

Christ reminds people externally through the signs (*signis admonemur foris*) which humans use, and through the prompting of these signs one is encouraged (*erudiamur*) to turn inward (*intro conuersi*) and so towards Christ. This is the final end to which all are directed, and this is the happy life which all seek.

Aug. ...quid sit autem in caelis, docebit ipse, a quo etiam per homines signis admonemur foris, ut ad eum intro conuersi erudiamur, quem diligere ac nosse beata uita est, quam se omnes clamant quaerere, pauci autem sunt, qui eam uere se inuenisse laetentur.

(46)

⁴⁷⁹ The phrase '*unus omnium magister in caelis*' is an echo of Matthew 23:8-10, "*unus enim est magister vester, omnes autem vos fratres estis... unus enim est pater vester qui in caelis est, nec*

11.1. The Learner.

0749 After his long monologue Augustine now returns to Adeodatus to question what judgement he passes upon the disquisition as a whole (*de hoc toto meo sermone*). The process has advanced through a discussion, and a disquisition by Augustine latterly, of the parts of the subject under consideration and now Adeodatus is asked to give judgement on the whole.

Aug. ...sed iam mihi dicas uelim, quid de hoc toto meo sermone sentias.
(46)

In passing judgement on what has been said Adeodatus must firstly say whether he knows that what has been said is true (*si enim uera esse quae dicta sunt nosti*). Also, if questioned about each of the propositions (*de singulis sententiis interrogatus*) he must say whether he would have known them (*ea te scire dixisses*).

Aug. ...si enim uera esse, quae dicta sunt, nosti, etiam de singulis sententiis interrogatus ea te scire dixisses. uides ergo, a quo ista didiceris...
(46)

0750 In this way, it is possible for Adeodatus to see from whom he has learned. It is not from Augustine as Adeodatus would have given all the required answers if questioned by Augustine. Also, if Adeodatus were not to know whether what has been said is true, then no-one has taught him, not even Christ, for Adeodatus would clearly be not yet able to learn.

Aug. ...uides ergo, a quo ista didiceris; neque enim a me, cui roganti omnia responderes. si autem uera esse non nosti, nec ego nec ille te docuit; sed ego, quia numquam possum docere, ille, quia adhuc tu non potes discere.
(46)

0751 Adeodatus states that he has learned through being prompted, or reminded, by Augustine's words (*didici admonitione uerborum tuorum*⁴⁸⁰) that words do nothing, in fact, other than prompt one to learn (*admoneri hominem ut discat*). The extent to which a speaker's thought is evident in his utterances is actually of little importance for what matters is the ability for the individual, who hears the words, to learn for himself.

Ad. ego uero didici admonitione uerborum tuorum nihil aliud uerbis quam admoneri hominem, ut discat, et perparum esse, quod per locutionem aliquanta cogitatio loquentis apparet...
(46)

0752 Judgement of what is true is taught through Christ. Also, it is notable that Adeodatus equates an advancement in learning, or understanding, with a deepening of one's love of Christ.

Ad. ... utrum autem uera dicantur, eum docere solum, qui se intus habitare, cum foris loqueretur, admonuit, quem iam fauente ipso tanto ardentius diligam, quanto ero in discendo prouector.
(46)

Augustine's continuous monologue both anticipated and resolved all of Adeodatus' doubts, and Adeodatus' assented to everything which has been argued. The source of Adeodatus' assent is the inner oracle which affirmed for him the truth of what was said.

Ad. ... uerumtamen huic orationi tuae, qua perpetua usus es, ob hoc habeo maxime gratiam, quod omnia, quae contradicere paratus eram, praeoccupauit atque dissoluit, nihilque omnino abs te derelictum est, quod me dubium faciebat, de quo non ita mihi responderet secretum illud oraculum, ut tuis uerbis asserebatur.
(46)

0753 Augustine frequently uses the term '*oraculum*' to refer to divine precepts (*Acad.* 1.1; *beata* v. 31; *mor.* 1.12; *conf.* 12.22; etc.), to Scripture (*conf.* 8.29; etc.), to

⁴⁸⁰ In *Confessiones* 7.16 Augustine uses *admonitus* to refer to the divine use of the books of the Platonists as an *admonitio* to him. Also, in *De libero arbitrio* 2.38 one is reminded outwardly but taught within ('*foris admonet intus docet*').

divine inspiration (such as the preaching of Ambrose, *conf.* 6.4), and also, as occurring in DM 46, to refer to divine revelation.

... audiat te intus sermocinantem qui potest; ego fidenter ex oraculo tuo clamabo...

(*conf.* 11.11)

The use of ‘*oraculum*’ is particularly well chosen in DM 46, however, for the word, which derives from ‘*orare*’ (to speak), reflects the verbal theme of the dialogue and ends the texts with a metaphor whereby the inner truth assents, in verbal imagery, to the truth of speech which one encounters. In a discussion of Augustine’s reception of a passage by Moses, the inner truth, again, is described in linguistic terms as assenting to the truth of the passage which Augustine has been considering.

audiam et intellegam, quomodo «in principio» fecisti «caelum et terram». scripsit hoc Moyses... sed unde scirem, an uerum diceret? ... intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis ... ueritas ... diceret: uerum dicit et ego statim certus confidenter ... dicerem: uerum dicis.

(*conf.* 11.5)

In like manner, on hearing Augustine’s disquisition Adeodatus has consulted⁴⁸¹ the inner truth as to the truth of what has been said and the oracle has asserted ‘*uerum dicit*’⁴⁸². Therefore, Adeodatus is able here too, at the end of the DM, to say to Augustine ‘*uerum dicis*’.

⁴⁸¹ The active role of the learner in this process and the necessity for a well directed will is crucial. For Augustine the “...[w]ill became the point of reference in the doctrines of intellect and sensual life, freedom and determination, moral evaluation of purpose and action, and, above all, in that of fall and redemption” (Dihle: 1982, 127).

⁴⁸² Cf. John 18:37.

12. Conclusion.

0754 The DM is a work which is in effect greater than the sum of its parts, that is to say the argument is not only the line of thought developed throughout the text but is essentially the work itself as a whole. The DM develops in a reasonably linear, though intricate, fashion; however, the greatest piece of argumentation for Augustine's thesis in the DM is in fact the DM itself. The DM is a demonstration of the position forwarded in the text that there is a place for a 'teacher' in the student/teacher relationship and that all students in the final analysis learn for themselves. The DM demonstrates this and in so doing also 'teaches' the reader through the text *qua* demonstration⁴⁸³; indeed, the reader himself engages in the process and through the demonstration learns, if so inclined to engage fully in the process and if capable of learning. For this reason, the approach taken in this thesis is such as to attempt to follow the intricacies of Augustine's argument in the DM in a linear fashion, as far as this has been possible. The purpose of this has been to avoid losing the cumulative impact of the argument as demonstrated in the DM and at the same time to attempt to analyse the progressive stages of Augustine's thought throughout the text. The process has been a difficult, and perhaps futile, one but whether any small success has been achieved in elucidating the development of the argument of the DM without castrating it of its cumulative and emergent power must remain finally in the judgement of the reader.

0755 The development of the argument in this thesis has always attempted to remain specifically focused upon what has been forwarded as the central concern of the DM: namely, the question of the possibility of the acquisition of knowledge and

⁴⁸³ Cf. § 4 and § 7 on the role of demonstration as a teaching method.

the place of the Paradox of Enquiry in relation to the development of the discussion of the possibility of such acquisition. The following brief conclusion will therefore not attempt to reiterate the strictly linear development of the DM as considered in this study, which is presented in outline form in the introduction⁴⁸⁴. The argument of this thesis will now be briefly reconsidered with reference to the development of the themes within the DM with specific reference to the ever present background of the search for a solution to the Paradox and therefore for a theory of knowledge acquisition.

0756 Augustine has been shown to have attempted to analyse and ultimately solve the problem of knowledge acquisition initially through introducing a consideration of the function of language as dependent upon a form of teaching and learning through *commemoratio*⁴⁸⁵. There was seen to be a tension within the treatment of *commemoratio* in that language can count as a form of evidence such as informs the sign-receiver, or hearer, what the speaker is thinking⁴⁸⁶, or more accurately what it is that the speaker wants the hearer to think of. *Commemoratio* also has the, epistemically more significant, role of serving to cause the hearer to recollect latent information only available inwardly within the individual's mind⁴⁸⁷. The words of others therefore serve as prompts, and as evidence of what they intend but no more. The items of knowledge to be accessed are wholly internal to the individual sign-receiver and are the only valid bases upon which any learning can depend⁴⁸⁸.

0757 Related to this treatment of *commemoratio* is the fact, for Augustine, that things can only be learned directly. This point is developed over the course of the

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. § 1.

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. § 2, § 8, § 9 and § 11.

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. § 10

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. § 8 and § 10

⁴⁸⁸ Cf. § 8 and § 9.

discussion of ostension and, more specifically, of demonstration⁴⁸⁹. There is a clear sense in which there is shown to be a semiotic separation from reality in any communicative act; for there is a lack of immediacy in linguistic acts⁴⁹⁰ and the sign-receiver has no grounds for knowledge which are objectively shared with the sign-giver. The sign-receiver is forever bound to an interpretation of what the sign-giver actually intends⁴⁹¹.

0758 The necessity for immediacy, or presence, for the acquisition of knowledge brings the argument back to the role of *commemoratio* as Recollection⁴⁹². This ultimately confines the role of language in knowledge acquisition to, at best, that of prompt or encouragement towards learning. However, it also raises once again the question as to how the individual can in fact be said to have valid grounds upon which to base what is essentially an inner act of knowledge acquisition. These grounds are given by the introduction of the theory of illumination and the Inner Christ⁴⁹³, which are ultimately unsatisfactory in providing an acceptable solution to the Paradox as the gap between knower and known is in the final analysis broached by the introduction of a third, divine, factor. The introduction of this factor appears to provide a solution to an insurmountable paradox. However, this is a philosophically unnecessary tactic on Augustine's part due, perhaps, to the fact that what he is doing is working out a solution based upon preconceived ideas.

0759 These ideas are central to Augustine's approach in the DM and, although there is a great deal of progress made in his discussion of language and in possible approaches to learning, there are more fundamental metaphysical, ontological and epistemological issues which cause the greatest difficulty in his approach to the

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. § 4 and § 7.

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. § 9.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. § 6 and § 7.

⁴⁹² § 8 and § 9.

Paradox. Augustine is fully committed to a realist approach to his ontology and to the necessity of direct and immediate presence of any item of knowledge for it to be known⁴⁹⁴. It is essentially these commitments and an inability to adequately fit them with a theory of language and of knowledge acquisition which must be revised rather than introducing a divine mediator to close the divide between the ever present item of knowledge and the would be knower. In addition, it is the introduction of just such a mediator as a means of providing validity to any item of knowledge which disallows any sense in which there can be external and objective grounds upon which one may be said to communicate information from one individual to another.

0760 Augustine, in the final analysis, is argued in this thesis to provide a sophisticated solution to a complex problem. However, the solution gives, perhaps, the best way out of a problem within given parameters rather than taking the necessary recourse to divine mediation and to denying anything beyond a limited usefulness to linguistic communication as a prompt to reconsider the very parameter upon which the approach to the problem rests.

⁴⁹³ Cf. § 9.

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. § 9.

Appendix 1: *de magistro* translation

Chapter Divisions

The chapter divisions (which are mine) correlate with the thematic divisions followed in the preceding thesis. The exceptions to this are Chapters 4 and 6, which are not separately discussed in the thesis.

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The Teacher.

(1) The Purpose of Speech.

1. *Augustine*: What do you suppose we want to accomplish when we speak?

Adeodatus: As it appears to me at this moment...either to teach or to learn.

Aug.: I appreciate the former, for it's obvious that when we speak, we want to teach; but to learn, how's that?

Adeo.: How else do you suppose but when we ask questions?

Aug.: Even then I don't think we intend anything other than to teach; for instance, do you ask questions for any other reason than to teach the person you're questioning what it is that you want?

Adeo.: You're right.

Aug.: So you see, when we speak, we intend nothing but to teach.

Adeo.: Not quite. For if speaking is nothing other than uttering words, I'm aware that we do this when we sing; and as we often sing when we're alone and when there's no one about to learn, I don't think we intend to teach anything.

Aug.: Yet, for my part, I think there's a certain kind of teaching through reminding, an important kind at that, which the very subject matter of our discussion will reveal.

However, if you don't think that we learn when we remember or that he who reminds us is teaching, I've no objection. For the present, I propose two reasons for speaking: either to teach, or to remind others or ourselves, which is something we certainly do when we sing; or don't you think so?

Adeo.: Not entirely. As it's rare that I sing to remind myself; mostly I do so just for the pleasure of it.

Aug.: I see what you mean. But surely you're aware that what gives you pleasure in song is a certain rhythm of the sound? Now, since this can be added to words or taken away from them, speaking is one thing and singing another: music's produced on pipes and the harp, birds sing, and we too sometimes sing a certain tune without words. This sound can be called song but not speech. Or do you disagree?

Adeo.: Not at all.

2. *Aug.*: So, you agree that speech is undertaken only to teach or remind?

Adeo.: I would, but it concerns me that we undoubtedly speak while praying, and yet it's improper to believe that God is taught or reminded of anything.

Aug.: I take it you're unaware that we were instructed to pray *in closed chambers*⁴⁹⁵ - a name which signifies the inmost recess of the mind - for no other reason than because God does not require to be reminded or taught by our speech in order to grant us what we desire. For one who speaks produces a sign of his will through articulate sound. Yet God should be sought and prayed to in the very depths of the rational soul, which is called 'the inner man', for he wanted these to be his temples. Have you not read in the work of the Apostle: *Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you*⁴⁹⁶; and: *Christ dwells in the inner man*⁴⁹⁷? Have you not noticed in the Prophet: *Speak in your hearts and be stung in your bed-chambers. Offer the sacrifice of justice and have hope in the Lord*⁴⁹⁸? Where do you think the sacrifice of justice is offered except in the temple of the mind and in the bed-chambers of the heart? Where sacrifice should be offered, there also should be prayer. For this reason, when we pray there is no need of speech - that is, of spoken words - except perhaps to signify [what is in] one's mind, as the priests do, not that God may hear but that men

⁴⁹⁵ Matth. 6:6.

⁴⁹⁶ I Cor. 3:16.

⁴⁹⁷ Eph. 3:17.

may, and, with a sense of unanimity through the reminding, may be raised up to God.

Or do you think otherwise?

Adeo.: I absolutely agree.

Aug.: Then doesn't it concern you that the greatest Teacher taught the disciples certain words when he was teaching them to pray, and in so doing seems simply to have taught them how to speak in prayer?

Adeo.: That doesn't concern me at all; for He didn't teach them the words but rather taught them of the things themselves by means of the words. Words with which they might remind themselves what it is they should pray for and from whom, when they prayed, as has been said, in the inmost recess of the mind.

Aug.: You understand correctly. For, even if someone were to contend that, although we utter no sound, we are nevertheless speaking inwardly in the presence of our mind, due to the fact that we call to mind the words themselves; at the same time I believe, however, that you're aware that, in this regard also, we do nothing through speech other than remind. This is because the memory, to which the words are fixed, repeats them and in this way makes the things themselves come into the mind, and the words are the signs of these things.

Adeo.: I understand and am following.

(2) The Problem of Communication.

3. *Aug.*: So we agree that words are signs.

Adeo.: We do.

Aug.: Can a sign be a sign unless it signifies something?

⁴⁹⁸ Ps. 4:4-5 (RSV); 4:5-6 (Vulgate).

Adeo.: It can't.

Aug.: How many words are in this verse: *si nihil ex tanta superis placet urbe relinquit*⁴⁹⁹ (If it pleases the gods that nothing remain from so great a city)?

Adeo.: Eight.

Aug.: So there are eight signs.

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: I take it that you understand this verse.

Adeo.: Well enough, I suppose.

Aug.: Tell me what each word signifies.

Adeo.: I know what 'if' signifies, but I can't think of another word with which to describe it.

Aug.: Whatever's signified by this word, you can at least think of the place in which it exists.

Adeo.: I suppose it signifies doubt, and where else is doubt but in the mind?

Aug.: I'll accept this in the meantime; go on to the other words.

Adeo.: What else does 'nothing' signify but that which is not?

Aug.: Perhaps you're right, but I'm prevented from agreeing by the fact that you've just conceded that there is no sign unless it signifies something; and surely, that which is not, can in no way be something. Therefore the second word in this verse isn't a sign because it doesn't signify anything, and we mistakenly agreed either that all words are signs or that every sign signifies something.

Adeo.: You're pressing too hard, but it is foolish to utter a word when we don't grasp what it signifies. However, I believe that as you're speaking with me now you aren't producing any sound in vain, but with every word which comes out of your mouth,

⁴⁹⁹ Vergil, *A.* 2.659.

you give a sign to me so that I may understand something. For this reason, you shouldn't utter those two syllables while you speak, if you don't signify anything by them. But if you know that a necessary utterance is made through them and that we are taught or reminded when they sound in our ears, surely you can see what I want to say, but am unable to explain.

Aug.: What then are we to do? Are we to say that what is signified by this word, rather than the thing itself, which is nothing, is a certain affection of the mind when it does not see a thing, and yet finds or thinks that it has found that which is not?

Adeo.: Perhaps that is what I was struggling to explain.

Aug.: Therefore let's go on from here, however it may be, in case a most absurd situation befalls us.

Adeo.: What can that be?

Aug.: If nothing detain us and we should be delayed.

Adeo.: That is ridiculous and yet I see that in some way this could happen, in fact I see that it has happened.

4. *Aug.:* We shall have a clearer understanding of this sort of contradiction in its own place, if God be willing. Now, return to that verse and try, as you can, to explain what the other words in it signify.

Adeo.: The third word is the preposition 'from', for which I think we can say 'of'.

Aug.: I'm not asking that you propose for one well known word another equally well known word which signifies the same thing, if indeed it has the same meaning; but in the meantime let us grant that it does. Certainly if that poet had not said 'from so great a city' but 'of so great a city', and I were to ask you what 'of' means, you would say 'from', since these two words, that is signs, would signify, as you think, one thing.

However, I'm looking for that one thing, whatever it may be, which is signified by these two signs.

Adeo.: It seems to me to signify a certain separation from that thing in which something had been, and which is said to be 'from' it, whether the thing does not remain, as in this verse where the city no longer remains but some Trojans were able to be 'from' it, or whether it does remain, just as we say that traders 'from' the city of Rome are in Africa.

Aug.: Even if I concede to you that this is so and don't list how many exceptions can be found to this rule of yours, it's certainly easy for you to see that you have explained words with words, that is signs with signs, and what is familiar with what is equally familiar. Yet, I would like you to show me, if you can, those things of which these are the signs.

5. *Adeo.*: I'm astonished that you're unaware, or rather pretend to be unaware, that what you wish can in no way be accomplished by my response, since we are holding a discussion where we are unable to respond except with words. You, however, are asking for things which, whatever they may be, are certainly not words, and yet you're using words to ask them of me. Therefore, first of all you ask without using words, and then I may respond in accordance with that condition.

(3) Ostensive Definition.

Aug.: I admit that that's fair; but if I were to ask what's signified when the three syllables '*paries*' (wall) are spoken, surely you'd be able to indicate it with your finger so that, while you were showing me and yet not using any words, I could immediately see the thing itself, of which this three-syllable word is the sign?

Adeo.: I concede that this could be done only with regard to names which signify objects, if those same objects are present.*

Aug.: Surely we don't call colour an object but rather a certain quality of a object?

Adeo.: That's right.

Aug.: Then how is it that this can also be pointed out with one's finger? Or do grant in addition to objects also the qualities of objects, so that when they are present, they too are no less able to be taught without words?

Adeo.: When I said objects, I meant all corporeal things; that is, everything which is perceived in objects.

Aug.: Yet consider whether you should also make some exceptions here.

Adeo.: You're right to warn me; for I shouldn't have said all corporeal things but rather all visible things. I admit that sound, smell, taste, weight, heat, and things which pertain to the other senses, although they can't be perceived without objects and therefore are corporeal, are nevertheless unable to be pointed out with one's finger.

Aug.: Haven't you ever seen how people hold a conversation, as it were, with the deaf by means of gesture and how the deaf themselves no less by gesture ask questions, respond, teach, or indicate all that they wish, or certainly most of it? When this occurs, not only visible things are revealed without words, but also sounds and tastes and all other such things; for in the theatres actors also often set forth and relate entire stories by means of dance and without using words.

Adeo.: I've nothing to say against this, except that not only I, but not even that dancing actor could indicate to you what 'from' signifies without using words.

* The ambiguity in the meaning of '*nomen*' is problematic for the meaning shifts, sometimes intentionally, between 'name' and 'noun'. There is much of philosophical interest which arises from Augustine's use of this ambiguity and therefore the standard translation of 'name' will be employed throughout.

6. *Aug.*: Perhaps you're right; but let's suppose that he can. You don't doubt, I think, that whatever the movement of his body by which he tries to show me the thing, which is signified by this word, it wouldn't be the thing itself but a sign of it. Therefore, he too will none the less indicate not a word with a word, but rather a sign with a sign, so that both the monosyllable 'from' and the gesture will signify one and the same thing, which I wanted to be shown to me without it being signified.

Adeo.: I ask you, who can do what you're asking?

Aug.: In the same way as the wall could be shown.

Adeo.: Our reasoning has taught that not even that can be shown without a sign. For the pointing of a finger certainly isn't the wall, but a sign is given by means of which the wall can be seen. So, I don't see anything which can be shown without signs.

Aug.: What if I were to ask you what walking is, and you were to get up and do it, surely you'd be employing the act itself to teach me rather than words or any other signs?

Adeo.: I admit that it's so and I'm embarrassed not to have seen so obvious a thing; and from this thousands of things now occur to me, which can be shown through themselves and not signs, such as eating, drinking, sitting, standing, shouting, and countless others.

Aug.: Tell me then, if I were completely ignorant of the meaning of the word 'walking' and were to ask you, while you were walking, what walking is; how would you teach me?

Adeo.: I'd do the same thing somewhat quicker, so that following your question you'd be shown through some new element and yet there would be nothing other than what ought to be shown.

Aug.: You do know that walking is one thing, hurrying another? For he who walks does not necessarily hurry, and he who hurries does not necessarily walk; for instance, we speak of haste in writing, in reading, and in countless other pursuits. Therefore, when you were to do more quickly, after my question, what you were in the process of doing, I would think that walking was nothing other than hurrying: you had added this new element, and because of this I would be misled.

Adeo.: I admit that we can't show something without a sign if we're asked when we're in the act of doing it; for if we add nothing, the enquirer will think that we're unwilling to show him and, while ignoring him, are continuing in what we were doing. Yet if he should ask about those things which we're able to do, and doesn't ask while we're doing them, we can do it after his question and so demonstrate what he asks by means of the thing itself rather than by a sign - unless he should ask me what speaking is while I'm actually speaking; for whatever I should say so as to teach him, it's necessary that I speak. And from there, I'll teach him without any trouble until I make plain to him what he wants to know, neither withdrawing from the thing itself, which he wants shown to him, nor seeking signs beyond the thing with which I may reveal it.

7. *Aug.:* Very clever! Now then, consider whether we're agreed that it's possible, without signs, to show those things which we're not doing when we're asked and yet are able to do immediately or which are perhaps signs themselves when we do them; for instance, when we talk we produce signs (*signa facere*), from where we derive the word 'signify' (*significare*).

Adeo.: Agreed.

(4) Classification of Communicables and Modes of Communication.

Aug.: Therefore, when there's a question raised about certain signs, the signs can be shown by means of signs; however, when it's about things which aren't signs, they can be shown either by performing them after the question is raised, if they can be performed, or by giving signs through which they can be brought to mind.

Adeo.: That's right.

(5) Classification (1): Signs Shown by Signs.

Aug.: Therefore, in this threefold division let us consider firstly, if you will, that in which signs are shown by signs; for surely words aren't the only signs?

Adeo.: No.

Aug.: It seems to me then that in speaking we signify by words either words themselves or other signs, as when we say 'gesture' or 'letter' - for the things signified by these two words are none the less signs - or we signify something else which isn't a sign, as when we say 'stone'. This word is a sign, for it signifies something, but what it signifies isn't necessarily a sign. However, this class, that is when those things, which aren't signs, are signified by words, isn't relevant to the topic which we've determined to discuss. For we've undertaken to consider that class in which signs are shown by means of signs, and in this we've discovered two parts, since through signs we teach or recall either the same signs or different signs; or doesn't it seem so to you?

Adeo.: No, it's clear.

8. *Aug.*: Tell me then to which sense do the signs which are words pertain.

Adeo.: To hearing.

Aug.: What of gesture?

Adeo.: To sight.

Aug.: What of when we find written words, they're undoubtedly words, aren't they?

Or are they more properly understood as signs of words, as a word is that which is uttered in an articulate voice with some significance - however, the voice can't be perceived by any sense other than hearing? So it happens that when a word is written it becomes a sign for the eyes, by which that which pertains to the ears may enter the mind.

Adeo.: I'm in complete agreement.

Aug.: I take it that you also agree that when we say 'name', we signify something.

Adeo.: That's true.

Aug.: What, then, do we signify?

Adeo.: Clearly, what each thing is called, for instance 'Romulus', 'Rome', 'virtue', 'river', and countless other things.

Aug.: Those four names surely signify something, don't they?

Adeo.: Of course.

Aug.: Is there no difference between these names and the things which are signified by them?

Adeo.: A very great difference.

Aug.: I'd like to hear from you what it might be.

Adeo.: This above all, that the former are signs, and the latter aren't.

Aug.: Shall we agree to call those things, which can be signified by signs and aren't signs, 'signifiable', just as we call those things 'visible' which can be seen, so as to more easily discuss them from now on?

Adeo.: We shall.

Aug.: Well then, are those four signs, that you just mentioned, signified by no other sign?

Adeo.: I'm astonished you think I've already forgotten that we discovered that written words are signs of those signs which are spoken.

Aug.: Tell me what difference there is between them.

Adeo.: The former are visible, the latter audible; for why not also allow this name, 'audible', if we allow 'signifiable'?

Aug.: Certainly I'll allow it and I'm grateful for the suggestion. Yet I ask again, can these four signs be signified by no other audible sign, in the same manner as the visible ones you recalled?

Adeo.: I recall that this also was said just recently; for I answered that 'name' signifies something, and set these four names under this signification, and I know that both name and these names, if spoken, are audible.

Aug.: What then is the difference between an audible sign and audible significates which in turn are signs?

Adeo.: I see this difference between what we call a 'name', and those four names which we set under its signification, namely that the former is an audible sign of audible signs, but that the latter, while they're audible signs, are not of signs but are partly of visible things, such as Romulus, Rome, river, and partly of intelligible things, such as virtue.

9. *Aug.*: I accept and approve of this. Yet, do you know that all things, which are uttered by an articulate voice with some significance, are called words?

Adeo.: I do.

Aug.: So, a name is a word, since it's uttered by an articulate voice with some significance. Also, when we say that an eloquent person uses 'good words', he certainly also uses names, and when the slave in Terence's play said to his old master "Good words, I beg",⁵⁰⁰ that old man also had spoken many names.

Adeo.: I agree.

Aug.: So, you concede that a name is also signified by these two syllables, which we utter when we say 'word' (*verbum*), and for this reason 'word' is a sign of 'name'.

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: I'd like you to answer this also: since 'word' is a sign of 'name', and 'name' is a sign of 'river', and 'river' is a sign of a thing which can now be seen, just as you've said what the difference is between this thing and 'river', which is its sign, and between this sign and 'name', which is a sign of this sign; what do you think is the difference between the sign of 'name', which we found to be 'word', and 'name' itself, of which it's the sign?

Adeo.: I understand the difference is that what is signified by 'name' is also signified by 'word' - for just as 'name' is a word, so too is 'river' a word. However, those things which are signified by 'word' aren't all signified by 'name' as well. For, that 'if', which the verse you proposed has at its beginning, and this 'from' - due to which we have, after long effort and with reason as our guide, reached this point - are both words and yet are not names, and many such examples are to be found. So, since all names are words but not all words are names, I think it's clear what the difference is between 'word' and 'name', which is to say, it's the difference between the sign of a sign which signifies no other signs, and the sign of a sign which in turn signifies other signs.

⁵⁰⁰ Terentius, *And.* 204.

Aug.: Do you concede that every horse is an animal and yet not every animal is a horse?

Adeo.: Who could doubt it?

Aug.: So, the difference between ‘name’ and ‘word’ is the same as that between horse and animal. Unless perhaps you’re discouraged from agreeing by the fact that we speak of ‘word’ (*verbum*) in another way, by which are signified those things that are conjugated through tenses, as ‘I write, I wrote’, ‘I read, I have read’. These are clearly not names.

Adeo.: You’ve stated exactly the doubts I had.

Aug.: Don’t let this concern you. For we call ‘signs’ in general all those things which signify something, and among these we also find words. We speak of ‘military ensigns’ (*signa militaria*) as well, which are appropriately called signs, but words don’t pertain to this class. However, if I were to say to you that as every horse is an animal, and yet not every animal a horse, so too every word is a sign, and yet not every sign a word; I suppose you wouldn’t have any doubts.

Adeo.: I now understand, and certainly agree that the difference between word in general and name is the same as that between animal and horse.

10. *Aug.:* Do you also know that when we say ‘animal’, this trisyllabic name, which is uttered by the voice, is one thing and what it signifies is another?

Adeo.: I’ve already conceded this concerning all signs and signifiabiles.

Aug.: You don’t think that all signs signify something other than what they are, do you? For instance, when we say ‘animal’, this trisyllabic word by no means signifies the very same thing that it is itself.

Adeo.: Not altogether. For when we say ‘sign’, it signifies not only other signs, whatever they are, but also itself. I mean, it’s a word and all words are certainly signs.

Aug.: What then with regard to the disyllable, when we say ‘word’ (*verbum*), surely a similar thing occurs? For, if everything, which is uttered by an articulate voice with some significance, is signified by this disyllable, it itself is also included in this class.

Adeo.: That’s right.

Aug.: Why then, surely it applies similarly to ‘name’? For it signifies names of every gender and ‘name’ itself is a name of neuter gender. If I were to ask you what part of speech a name is, could you answer me correctly other than by saying ‘name’?

Adeo.: You’re right.

Aug.: So, there are signs, which among the other things, which they signify, also signify themselves.

Adeo.: There are.

Aug.: Now, when we say ‘conjunction’ (*coniunctio*), this four syllable sign doesn’t seem to be the same, does it?

Adeo.: Not at all. For, the things which it signifies aren’t names, although it itself is a name.

11. *Aug.*: You’ve been very attentive. Now see whether we can find signs which signify each other reciprocally so that just as the former is signified by the latter so too is the latter signified by the former. For there is no such relationship between this four-syllable word, when we say ‘conjunction’ (*coniunctio*), and those words, which are signified by it, as when we say ‘if’, ‘or’, ‘for’, ‘for surely’, ‘unless’, ‘therefore’, ‘because’, and the like. These are signified by that one word, however that single four-syllable word is signified by none of these.

Adeo.: I see; and I’d like to know which signs do signify each other reciprocally.

Aug.: Don’t you know, then, that when we say ‘name’ and ‘word’ we’re saying two words?

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: Well, don't you know that when we say 'name' and 'word' we're saying two names?

Adeo.: I know this too.

Aug.: So you know that 'name' is signified by 'word' just as 'word' is signified by 'name'.

Adeo.: I agree.

Aug.: Can you say what difference there is between them, except that they are written and pronounced differently?

Adeo.: Perhaps I can; for I see that it's the same as I said just recently. When we say 'words', we signify everything which is uttered in an articulate voice with some significance. For this reason, every name and even 'name' itself, when we say it, is a word; but not every word is a name, although when we say 'word' it's a name.

12. *Aug.:* What if someone were to state to you and prove that just as every name is a word, so too is every word a name, could you find any difference between them except in the sound of the letters?

Adeo.: I couldn't, and I don't think that there is any difference.

Aug.: What if all things, which are uttered in an articulate voice with some significance, are both words and names, but are words for one reason and names for another; will there be no difference between 'name' and 'word'?

Adeo.: I don't understand how that could be.

Aug.: At least you understand that everything coloured is visible and everything visible coloured, although these two words have a distinct and different signification.

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: What, then, if likewise every word is a name and every name is a word, although these two names or two words, that is ‘name’ and ‘word’, have a different signification?

Adeo.: I see now that it could happen, but I’m waiting for you to explain how.

Aug.: I think you see that everything, which is expressed in an articulate voice with some significance, both strikes the ear, so as to be perceived, and is committed to the memory, so as to be known.

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: So two things happen when we utter something with a sound of this sort.

Adeo.: That’s right.

Aug.: What if words are so called from one of these two and names from the other: namely, words (*verba*) from the striking (*verbere*), and names (*nomina*) from the knowing (*noscere*), so that the first should be called after its connection with the ears, and the second after its connection with the mind?

13. *Adeo.:* I’ll concede this when you’ve shown how we can rightly say that every word is a name.

Aug.: That’s easy. For I believe that you’ve learned and accept that a pronoun is so called because it can stand for a name, though it denotes its object with a less complete signification than the name. I think this was the definition which you used to repeat to your grammar teacher: a pronoun is a part of speech which, when put in place of a name, signifies the same thing but less fully.

Adeo.: I recall this and agree.

Aug.: So, you see that according to this definition, pronouns stand for nothing except names and can be used only in the place of names. For example, when we say, ‘this man’, ‘the king himself’, ‘the same woman’, ‘this gold’, ‘that silver’ - ‘this’,

‘himself’, ‘the same’, ‘this’, and ‘that’ are pronouns; ‘man’, ‘king’, ‘woman’, ‘gold’, ‘silver’ are names, and these signify the things more fully than the pronouns do.

Adeo.: Yes, I agree.

Aug.: Now then, mention a few conjunctions, whichever you like.

Adeo.: ‘And’, ‘too’, ‘but’, ‘also’.

Aug.: Don’t you think that all of these, which you’ve said, are names?

Adeo.: Not at all.

Aug.: At least you think I spoke correctly when I said: “...all of these, which you’ve said...”?

Adeo.: Quite correct. And now I understand how remarkably you’ve shown that I did mention names, for otherwise ‘all of these’ could not correctly have been said of them. Yet, still, I’m afraid that you seem to me to have spoken correctly only because it’s undeniable that these four conjunctions are also words, and so ‘all of these’ can correctly be said of them because it’s correct to say ‘all of these words’. However, if you ask me what part of speech ‘words’ is, I’ll give no other reply than ‘a name’. So perhaps the pronoun was attached to this name, and so, that expression of yours was correct.

14. *Aug.*: Your mistake’s subtle. So that you might stop being deceived, pay closer attention to what I’m about to say; if I’m able to say what I intend. Using words to consider words is as complicated as interlocking and rubbing the fingers of one hand with those of the other, where it’s scarcely discernible, except by the person doing it, which fingers are itching and which are relieving those that itch.

Adeo.: You’ve got my full attention; for this analogy has caught my interest.

Aug.: Words surely consist of sound and letters.

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: So, to use that authority which is dearest to us, when the Apostle Paul says, “In Christ there was not *is* and *is not*, but *is* was in Him”⁵⁰¹, I don’t suppose one should think that these three letters, which we enunciate when we say ‘is’ (*est*), were in Christ, but rather that what is signified by these three letters in Him.

Adeo.: You’re right.

Aug.: Then you understand that he who said ‘*is* was in Him’, said nothing other than ‘that which was in Him, is called *is*’. In the same way, if he had said, ‘virtue was in Him’, surely he would be taken to have said, ‘that which was in Him, is called virtue’. We shouldn’t think that those two syllables, which we enunciate when we say ‘virtue’, were in Him, but rather what is signified by those two syllables.

Adeo.: I understand, and am following you.

Aug.: Of course you also understand that there’s no difference in whether one says, ‘it’s called virtue’ or ‘it’s named virtue’?

Adeo.: That’s obvious.

Aug.: So it’s just as obvious that there’s no difference in whether someone says, ‘that which was in Him, is called *is*’ or ‘is named *is*’.

Adeo.: I don’t see any difference here either.

Aug.: Do you now see what I want to show you?

Adeo.: Well, not yet.

Aug.: So you don’t see that it’s a name by which something is named?

Adeo.: Clearly I can see that there’s nothing more certain.

Aug.: You can see then that ‘is’ is a name, since that which was in Christ is named ‘is’.

Adeo.: I can’t deny it.

⁵⁰¹ II Cor. 1:19.

Aug.: Yet if I were to ask you what part of speech ‘is’ is, I don’t think you’d say that it’s a name but that it’s a verb, although reason has shown that it too is a name.

Adeo.: It’s exactly as you say.

Aug.: Surely you don’t still doubt that the other parts of speech are also names in the same way as we’ve demonstrated?

Adeo.: I don’t, since I must admit that they signify something. Yet if you ask what each of the things, which they signify, are called, or rather, are named, I can give no answer except that they’re those parts of speech, which we don’t call names, but which, as I see, we are constrained to so call.

15. *Aug.*: Doesn’t it disturb you at all that there might be someone, who could upset our argument by saying that authority should be attributed to the Apostle not over words but over things; and that for this reason the foundation of this argument is not as secure as we think? As it’s possible that, although he lived and taught with great rectitude, Paul spoke less correctly when he said ‘*is* was in Him’, especially since he himself confesses that he is inexperienced in speech. How do you think that man could be refuted?

Adeo.: I’ve got no reply. Can you please find one of those to whom is granted the greatest knowledge of words, by whose authority you can the better achieve what you desire?

Aug.: Then you think that without authorities reason itself is less adequate. Reason has demonstrated that all parts of speech signify something and that this something is so called on that basis; yet, if something is so called, it’s also named; if named, it’s certainly named by a name, which is easily discerned in different languages. If I were to ask what the Greeks name that which we name ‘who’, who can’t see that the answer is ‘*τίς*’; or what the Greeks name what we name ‘wish’, that the answer is

‘θέλω’; or what they name what we name ‘well’, that the answer’s ‘καλῶς’; or what they name what we name ‘writing’, that the answer’s ‘τὸ γεγραμμένον’; or what they name what we name ‘and’, that the answer’s ‘καί’; or what they name what we name ‘from’, that the answer’s ‘ἀπό’; or what they name what we name ‘alas’, that the answer’s ‘οἶ’. In fact, with regard to all those parts of speech, which I’ve just listed, he’d speak correctly who was to ask questions in such a way, which wouldn’t be possible unless they were names. Therefore, as we’re able, through such reasoning, to dispense with the authority of all eloquent men and to hold that the Apostle Paul spoke correctly, what need is there to ask which person supports our proposal?

16. Yet in case some slower or more impudent person should still not give in, and should refuse to do so except on the authority of those who, it is generally agreed, lay down the rules of usage: what can be found in the Latin language of more excellence than Cicero? In fact, in his most renowned orations, which are called the *Verrines*, he calls ‘*coram*’ a name; ‘*coram*’ which is a preposition, or rather, in that particular passage, an adverb⁵⁰². However, since it’s possible that I don’t understand that passage very well and that it may be interpreted differently at another time either by myself or by another, there is, I think, an argument to which there can be no reply. For, the most eminent teachers of dialectic tell us that a name and a verb constitute a complete statement, which can be affirmed or denied. In a certain passage, Cicero calls this a proposition⁵⁰³. Now, when the verb is in the third person, they say that the nominative case of the name should go with it, and rightly so. For if you’ll consider with me that when we say ‘a man sits’ or ‘a horse runs’, I think you recognise that they are two propositions.

Adeo.: Yes.

⁵⁰² “...viditisne totum hoc nomen coram ubi facit delatum esse in litura?” Cicero, *Verr.* 2.104.

Aug.: You can see that in each one there's one name, 'man' in one, and 'horse' in the other, and one verb, 'sits' in one, and 'runs' in the other.

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: So, if I were only to say '...sits' or '...runs', you'd rightly ask me, 'who?' or 'what?', so that I'd answer 'a man' or 'a horse' or 'an animal' or anything else by which the name could be restored to the verb so as to complete the proposition, that is, such a statement as can be affirmed or denied.

Adeo.: I understand.

Aug.: Now pay attention. Imagine we see something rather far away and are uncertain whether it's an animal, a rock, or something else, and I say to you: 'Because it's a man, it's an animal'. Wouldn't I be speaking rashly?

Adeo.: Very much so, but surely it wouldn't be rash for you to say: 'If it's a man, it's an animal'.

Aug.: You're right. So, the 'if' in your statement is acceptable to me and to you, and yet the 'because' in mine is unacceptable to both of us.

Adeo.: I agree.

Aug.: Now see if these two statements are complete propositions: '*If* is acceptable' and '*Because* is unacceptable'.

Adeo.: They are.

Aug.: Now then, in those statements, which are the verbs and which are the names?

Adeo.: The verbs are 'is acceptable' and 'is unacceptable'. As for the names, what else are they than 'if' and 'because'?

Aug.: So, it's been satisfactorily proved that these two conjunctions are also names.

Adeo.: Quite so.

⁵⁰³ Cicero *Tusc.* 1.14, on ἄξιόμια; cf. also, *acad.* 2.95, and *fat.* 28.

Aug.: Can you prove on your own that this is the same with regards to the other parts of speech, according to the same rule?

Adeo.: Yes.

17. *Aug.*: Then let us pass on from here. Now tell me, just as we found all words to be names and all names to be words, do all names seem likewise to be designations (*vocabula*), and all designations to be names?

Adeo.: I don't clearly see what difference there is between these except the different sound of the syllables.

Aug.: In the meanwhile I make no objection, although there is no lack of those who distinguish them also with regard to signification, but whose opinion there is no need to consider just now. But certainly you notice that we have now reached those signs which signify each other reciprocally, with no difference between them except sound, and which signify themselves together with all the other parts of speech.

Adeo.: I don't understand.

Aug.: Then you don't understand that 'name' is signified by 'designation' and 'designation' by 'name', so that there's no difference between them except the sound of the letters, as far as concerns the general term 'name'. For we also speak of the specialised 'name', which among the eight parts of speech is such that it does not include the other seven.

Adeo.: I understand.

Aug.: But this is what I said: 'designation' and 'name' signify each other reciprocally.

18. *Adeo.*: I grasp that, but I am asking what you meant when saying: 'They signify themselves also along with the other parts of speech'.

Aug.: Surely our previous reasoning has taught us that all the parts of speech can be called both names and designations; namely, are able to be signified by both ‘name’ and ‘designation’?

Adeo.: That’s right.

Aug.: What then if I were to ask you what you would call ‘name’ itself, that is, that sound expressed by two syllables, surely you’d correctly answer ‘a name’?

Adeo.: Yes.

Aug.: Surely this sign, which we enunciate with four syllables when we say ‘conjunction’ (*coniunctio*), doesn’t signify itself in this way? For this name cannot be counted among those things which it signifies.

Adeo.: Accepted.

Aug.: That is, what was meant by: ‘name’ signifies itself along with the other things which it signifies. You can understand for yourself that the same also holds for ‘designation’.

Adeo.: It’s easy now. But it comes to my mind that ‘name’ is spoken of both generally and specifically, yet ‘designation’ is not taken to be among the eight parts of speech. Therefore, apart from the difference in sound, I take them to differ in this respect also.

Aug.: Do you think that ‘name’ and ‘ὄνομα’ differ other than in the sound, by which also the Latin and Greek languages are discerned?

Adeo.: Here I don’t see any other difference.

Aug.: So we’ve discovered those signs which signify themselves, and the one is in turn signified by the other, and whatever is signified by one is signified by the other, and there is no difference between them except in sound. For we have just now discovered this fourth type; the three previous ones are understood to concern both ‘name’ and ‘word’.

Adeo.: Yes it has been discovered.

(6) Review.

19. *Aug.*: Now I'd like you to review what we have found out through our discussion.

Adeo.: I'll do so as far as I am able. First of all I recall that we discussed the question as to why we speak, and discovered that we speak for the sake of teaching or reminding. Since, when we ask a question, we do nothing other than teach the person, who is being questioned, what we want to hear. Also in singing, which we seem to do for the sake of enjoyment (but the enjoyment is not properly from the speech), and in prayer to God, whom we cannot regard to be taught or reminded, the words achieve the effect that either we remind ourselves or that others are reminded or taught by us. Then, when it was sufficiently clear that words are nothing other than signs, and that those things, which do not signify anything, cannot be signs; then you quoted a verse, and I tried to show what each of its words signified. The verse was: 'If it pleases the gods that nothing from so great a city remain'. We were unable to ascertain what the second word (*nihil*) of this verse signified, although it's well known and obvious. Although it seemed to me that we don't pointlessly introduce this word in speech, but do so as we teach the listener something by it, you responded that perhaps the affection of the mind itself is indicated by this word when it finds, or thinks it has found, the thing which it was seeking, to be non-existent. Then, avoiding the profundity of the question with a joke, you deferred the explanation to another time - in case you think that I have forgotten your debt also.

Then, when I was struggling to explain the third word in the verse, you urged me to show not another word which meant the same, but rather the thing itself which was signified by the word; and when I said that this was impossible for us to do in conversation, we came to those things which are shown to enquirers by a pointed finger. I thought that all these things were corporeal, but we found this only to hold for visible things. Somehow from here we came to the deaf and actors, who not only signify things which can be seen, but many other things besides, and virtually everything which we say, they signify without the voice but by means of gesture; yet we found that these same gestures are signs. Then again we began to ask how we could show, without any signs, the things themselves which are signified by signs, when that wall, colour, and every visible thing, which is shown by the pointing of a finger, was clearly demonstrated to be shown by some sign. Here I was mistaken when I said that it was impossible for such a thing to be found, and at length we agreed that those things could be demonstrated without a sign which we are not in the act of doing when they are asked of us, and which we are able to do after being asked. However, speech is not from that class, for even if we were speaking when we were asked what speaking is, it was apparent enough that it could easily be demonstrated through the act itself.

20. From this we realised that either signs are shown by signs, or other things, which are not signs, are shown by signs, or even without signs things, which we can do after being asked, can be demonstrated; and of these three we accepted that the first should be considered and discussed more diligently. From this discussion it was clear that there were partly signs which could not in turn be signified by those signs which they signified, as is this four-syllable word, when we say ‘conjunction’ (*coniunctio*); partly those which can, as when we say ‘sign’ we also signify ‘word’,

and when we say 'word' we also signify 'sign'; for 'sign' and 'word' are both two signs and two words. In this class however, in which they signify each other reciprocally, it was shown that some mean not quite the same, some the same to a certain degree, and some do indeed mean the same thing. For this two syllable word, which sounds when we say 'sign' (*signum*), signifies everything by which anything is signified; however, when we say 'word', it is not a sign of all signs, but only of those uttered by an articulate voice. From which it is clear that, although 'word' is signified by 'sign', and 'sign' by 'word', that is, the former two syllables (*verbum*) by the latter (*signum*) and the latter by the former; 'sign' has a wider range of meaning than 'word', namely, the latter two syllables signify more than the former. However, 'word' in its general sense means just as much as 'name' in its general sense. For our reasoning showed that all parts of speech are also names, because pronouns can be added to them, and concerning all of them it can be said that they name something; and there is not one of them which cannot complete a proposition when a verb is joined to it. Although 'name' and 'word' have the same range of meaning for the reason that all things, which are words, are also names; nevertheless, they are not the same. For it was argued, with enough probability, that they are called words for one reason and names for another. Indeed, it was shown that one of these was denoted with regard to the reverberation in the ear and the other with regard to the recollection in the mind. This can be understood from the fact that in speaking we rightly say, 'What is the name of this thing?', when we want to commit a thing to memory; but are not accustomed to say, 'What is the word for this thing?'. We found 'name' and 'ὄνομα' to not only have the same range of meaning, but to signify exactly the same thing, and there to be no difference between them except the sound of the letters. Indeed, in that class in which they signify themselves reciprocally, I forgot that we

found no sign which does not signify itself also among the other things which it signifies.

I've recalled these things as well as I can. Now you, whom I think said nothing in this discussion except with knowledge and assurance, can see whether I have summarised these things well and in good order.

21. *Aug.*: You have indeed recalled satisfactorily from memory everything which I wanted and I must confess that these distinctions now seem much clearer to me than when we were both, through enquiry and discussion, rooting them out from I know not what hiding places. What end I strive to reach with you through so twisting a route is difficult to say at this point. Perhaps you think that we're playing a game and divert the mind from serious matters, as it were, with childish problems; or that we seek some small and mediocre expedient; or if you suspect that this discussion is to produce something great, perhaps you want to know it right now, or at least to hear it. I'd want you to believe that I didn't undertake this conversation for cheap sport, although we may perhaps have been amusing ourselves, yet that should not be considered in a childish sense, nor should it be thought that the benefits are small or mediocre. If I were to say that there is a certain blessed and eternal life, to which I desire that we be led by God the guide, namely Truth itself, along certain steps suited to our feeble gait; I am afraid that I may seem ridiculous, I who began to set out upon so great a way in consideration not of things in themselves, which are signified, but in that of their signs. Therefore, you'll grant me pardon if I play this prelude with you, not for the sake of play, but to exercise the strength and sharpness of the mind, by means of which we might be able not only to endure the heat and light of that region, where is the blessed life, but also to love them.

Adeo.: Go on as you've begun; for I would never think those things contemptible which you think worthy of speech or act.

(7) Classification (2.1): Things Shown by Signs.

22. *Aug.*: Let's consider the division when other signs are not signified by signs, but those things which we call signifiabiles (*significabilia*). In the first place tell me whether man (*homo*) is man (*homo*).

Adeo.: Now I truly don't know whether you're fooling or not.

Aug.: Why so?

Adeo.: Because you think it need be asked of me whether man is anything other than man.

Aug.: So you would think that fun is being made of you if I were also to ask whether the first syllable of this name is other than 'ho' and the second other than 'mo'.

Adeo.: Certainly.

Aug.: But those two syllables together make 'homo'; or will you deny this?

Adeo.: Who could deny it?

Aug.: So I'm asking whether you're those two syllables joined together?

Adeo.: In no way, but I see what you mean.

Aug.: Tell me then, so that you don't think me offensive.

Adeo.: You think the conclusion is that I'm not a man.

Aug.: Don't you think the same, since you grant the truth of all the previous arguments from which this is deduced?

Adeo.: I'll not tell you what I think until I firstly hear whether, when you asked whether 'man' is 'man', you were asking me about those two syllables or about the thing which they signify.

Aug.: Rather, you answer in the sense in which you took my question; for if it's ambiguous, you should have been wary of this first of all and not answered me until you were sure in what way I had asked it.

Adeo.: Why should this ambiguity impede me, when I have answered both questions? For 'man' certainly is 'man'; and those two syllables are nothing other than those two syllables, that is, what they signify is nothing other than that which 'man' is.

Aug.: Very clever, but why have you taken this alone in both senses called 'man', and not the other things which we spoke of?

Adeo.: Why am I being taken to task for not taking the others also in such a way?

Aug.: To omit other reasons, in regard to the very first question of mine if you had taken it entirely in the sense of the syllable sounds, you would not have answered me at all; for I would have seemed to you not to have asked anything. Now when I in fact pronounced three words, I repeated the middle one, saying 'whether man is man' (*utrum homo homo sit*), you took the first and last words not according to them as signs, but in accordance with those things which are signified by them. And from this alone it is immediately clear that you thought, in all certainty, that the question should be answered.

Adeo.: You're right.

Aug.: Then why did you decide to take in that way only the word which is placed in the middle, namely both according to its sound and according to what it signifies?

Adeo.: Look, I'm actually taking it in its entirety from that aspect only by which it is signified; for I agree that we cannot hold a discussion at all unless the mind is carried

by the words that we hear to those things whose signs they are. So, now show me how I was deceived by this reasoning, through which it is concluded that I am not a man.

Aug.: Rather, I'll ask the same questions again, so that you may yourself discover where you went wrong.

Adeo.: Fine.

23. *Aug.*: I'll not ask what I asked firstly, since you've already conceded it. So, consider carefully whether the syllable 'ho' is nothing other than 'ho' and whether 'mo' is nothing other than 'mo'.

Adeo.: Here I see absolutely nothing else.

Aug.: Consider also whether 'man' (*homo*) results from the combination of these two.

Adeo.: In no way should I have granted this; for it was accepted, and rightly so, that when a sign is given one should pay heed to that which is signified, and from consideration of this grant or deny what is said. However, as to those syllables pronounced separately, because they have sound without any significance, it was granted that they are the sounds themselves.

Aug.: Therefore, you accept and hold that one should not answer questions except with regard to those things signified by words.

Adeo.: I don't see why it should be unsatisfactory, if they are only words.

Aug.: I'd like to know how you would reply to that man, about whom we hear in the joke that he concluded that a lion came out of the mouth of a person with whom he was arguing. For when he had asked whether those things which we say come out of our mouths, and the other was unable to deny it; he caused the man, and he I so easily, to say lion in the course of the discussion. When this was done he began to scoff at the ridiculous nature of this and to insist that since he had admitted that whatever we

say comes out of our mouth and that he could not deny that he had said lion, therefore a decent fellow seemed to have spewed up so terrible a beast.

Adeo.: It would not be difficult to refute this trickster; for I would not concede that whatever we say comes out of our mouth. Those things which we speak of we signify; not the thing, which is signified, but the sign, by which it is signified, issues from the mouth of the speaker, except when signs themselves are signified - a class which we discussed earlier.

24. *Aug.*: Indeed, in this way you would be well prepared against him. Yet what answer would you give me if I were to ask whether 'man' is a name?

Adeo.: What else except that it is a name?

Aug.: When I see you, surely I don't see a name?

Adeo.: No.

Aug.: Do you want me then to tell you what follows?

Adeo.: Please don't. For the refutation itself shows me that I am not 'man', since when you asked me whether 'man' was a name I replied that it was. For we decided to assent to or deny what is said from the basis of the thing which is signified.

Aug.: Yet it seems to me that you have not in vain fallen into this reply; for the very law of reason itself, imposed upon our minds, overcame your vigilance. If I were to ask what man is, you would perhaps reply 'an animal'; however, if I were to ask what part of speech 'man' is, you could in no manner reply correctly except by saying 'a name'. Therefore, since 'man' is found to be both a name and an animal, the former is said as a result of that division by which it is a sign and the latter from that by which it is being signified. Therefore, to him who asks whether man is a name I should give no other reply than 'it is'; for he adequately signifies that he wishes to hear an answer from that division by which it is a sign. If however he asks whether it is an animal, I

should answer much more readily; for if, remaining reticent about ‘name’ and ‘animal’, he were only to ask what man (*homo*) is, the mind (by that accepted rule of speech) would hasten to that which is signified by these two syllables and would give no reply other than ‘an animal’; or even the whole definition would be stated, namely, ‘a rational, mortal animal’. Or does it not seem so to you?

Adeo.: Absolutely. But when we granted that it is a name, how are we to avoid that extremely insulting conclusion by which we are deduced not to be men?

Aug.: How do you think but by making clear that the inference is not drawn from that division in which we agreed with the questioner. Or if he admits that he inferred it from the other division, it should by no means be feared. For why should I be afraid to admit that I am not ‘man’ (*hominem*), that is, those three syllables?

Adeo.: Nothing could be truer. Therefore, why does the mind take offence when one says: ‘Therefore you are not man’; since according to what was granted nothing truer could be said?

Aug.: Because, as soon as those words are pronounced, I am unable but to think that the conclusion refers to that which is signified by these two syllables, that is, in accordance with the rule which is naturally the more forceful, so that when the signs are heard the attention is carried towards the things signified.

Adeo.: I accept what you say.

25. *Aug.*: Now then, I want you to understand that the things which are signified should be given more weight than the signs. For whatever exists on account of something else is necessarily of less worth than that on account of which it exists, unless you think otherwise.

Adeo.: I think that here one should not rashly agree; for when we say ‘excrement’, I think this name is by far superior to the thing it signifies. What offends us when

hearing the word does not pertain to the sound of the word itself; for the name 'excrement' (*caenum*), by virtue of one changed letter, becomes 'heaven' (*caelum*). But between the things signified by these names we see how great the difference is. Therefore, I should in no way attribute to this sign what we loathe in the thing which it signifies; and moreover I rightly prefer the former (sign) to the latter (thing), for we more willingly hear the former than come into contact with the latter with any of our senses.

Aug.: You're very vigilant. So it is false that all things should be given more weight than their signs.

Adeo.: So it seems.

Aug.: Therefore, tell me what do you think those people intended who gave a name to this foul and detestable thing; or whether you approve or disapprove of them?

Adeo.: I dare not approve or disapprove of them, nor do I know what they intended.

Aug.: Are you at least able to know what you intend when pronouncing this name?

Adeo.: I can clearly do this; for I want to signify that I am teaching or am reminding him, with whom I am talking, about that thing which I deem he should be taught or reminded about.

Aug.: This teaching or reminding, or this being taught or reminded, which either you fully express by means of this name or is expressed to you, must surely be held as more important than the name itself?

Adeo.: I grant that the knowledge which results from this sign is more important than the self same sign, but I do not think likewise as regards the thing itself.

26. *Aug.*: Therefore, in our opinion, although it is false that all things should be preferred to their signs, it is however not false that everything which exists on account of something else is more worthless than that on account of which it exists. Certainly

the knowledge of excrement, on account of which this name was established, should be held of more worth than the name itself, which we ascertained to be preferable to the self-same excrement. For it is not for any other reason that this knowledge is considered superior to the sign, with which we are concerned, unless it is because the sign is demonstrated to exist on account of the knowledge, and not the knowledge on account of the sign. As when a certain glutton and, as the Apostle says, a worshipper of his belly⁵⁰⁴ said that he lived so that he might eat; a frugal man who heard him was unable to endure this and said, 'How much better it would be were you to eat so as to live'. He said this according to the very same rule; for the glutton caused displeasure for no other reason than that he valued his own life so little that he regarded it cheaper than the pleasure of the palate, when saying that he lived for feasting. The other man justly deserves praise because in regard to these two things, understanding which exists on account of which, that is, what was inferior to what, he warned that one must eat rather so as to live than live so as to eat. Similarly, to some talkative lover of words who were to say 'I teach so as to talk', both you and some other man not unskilled in discernment would respond 'My man, why don't you rather speak so as to teach?'

If these are true, as you recognise them to be, you surely see how much the less words ought to be considered than that on account of which we use the words, since the very use of words should now be held superior to the words. For words exist so that we may use them; however, we use them for teaching. Therefore, in proportion as teaching is better than speaking, so speaking is better than words. So, instruction is much better than words. But I want to hear what objections you may want to make.

⁵⁰⁴ Rom. 16:18.

27. *Adeo.*: I agree that instruction is better than words, but I don't know whether there isn't something which can be used in objection to that rule by which it is said that everything which exists on account of something else is inferior to that on account of which it exists.

Aug.: We'll discuss this more conveniently and more thoroughly at another time. For the present, what you concede is enough for that which I want to establish. For you grant that the understanding of things is more valuable than their signs; and so, an understanding of things which are signified must be preferred to an understanding of signs. Or does it not seem so to you?

Adeo.: Surely I conceded not that a knowledge of things is superior to a knowledge of signs but rather to the signs themselves? And so, I'm apprehensive about agreeing with you here. For what if, just as the name 'excrement' is superior to the thing which it signifies, so too the knowledge of this name is also superior to the knowledge of the thing, although the name itself is inferior to this understanding? Indeed there are four things here: the name and the thing, the knowledge of the name and the knowledge of the thing. Therefore, just as the first is superior to the second, why not also the third to the fourth? But were it not superior, surely it should not be inferior?

28. *Aug.*: I see how remarkably you have both upheld what you've granted and explained what you've thought. But, as I think, you understand that this trisyllabic name, which is pronounced when we say 'vice' (*vitium*), is superior to that which it signifies, although the knowledge of the name itself is far inferior to the knowledge of vices. Therefore, although you may also distinguish these four; and consider the name and the thing, the knowledge of the name and the knowledge of the thing, we justly place the first before the second. For when Persius says, 'But he is benumbed by vice', this name, when placed in the poem, does not debase the verse, but indeed adds

some embellishment; yet when the thing which is signified by this name is present in anyone, it compels them to be vicious. But the third thing does not thus excel the fourth, rather we observe that the fourth surpasses the third. For a knowledge of this name is inferior to a knowledge of vices.

Adeo.: Even when this knowledge makes people more miserable, do you think it is preferable? For the same Persius places this one before all punishments, which either the cruelty of tyrants has devised or their greed calculated, by which men are tortured who are compelled to acknowledge vices which they cannot avoid?

Aug.: In this way you could deny that the knowledge even of the virtues should be preferred to the knowledge of this name (virtue), because to see virtue and not to have it is a torment; a torment with which that same satirist hoped the tyrants would be punished.

Adeo.: May God avert this madness. For I now understand that it is not knowledge itself, with which the best instruction of all imbues the mind, which is to be blamed; but those people should be judged the most miserable of all, just as I think Persius deemed, who are affected by such a disease that not even so great a medicine can relieve.

Aug.: You understand well; but whatever the opinion of Persius means to him, what is it to us? For we are not subjected to the authority of such as him in these matters. Besides, if one knowledge is to be preferred to another sort, it's not easy to explain here. I am satisfied that it has been shown that the knowledge of things which are signified, even if it is not superior to the knowledge of signs, is nevertheless superior to the signs themselves.

(8) Classification (2.2): Things Shown by Performance.

Therefore, now let's analyse in preference that class of things which we said could be shown through themselves, without signs, such as speaking, walking, sitting, lying, and others of this sort.

Adeo.: I recall what you're talking about.

29. *Aug.*: Do you think that all actions which we're able to do as soon as we are asked can be shown without a sign, or is there any exception?

Adeo.: Considering this whole class again and again I still can't find anything which can be taught without a sign, except perhaps speaking, and perhaps teaching if someone were to ask what it is. For whatever I should do after his question, so that he may learn, I don't deviate from the act itself which he wants demonstrated to him. If, for example, someone were to ask me what walking is while I was doing nothing, as has been said, or while doing something else; and immediately I should try, without signs, to teach him what he wants to know by walking. How am I to warn him against thinking that walking only consists in as much as I have walked? And if he thinks this, he'll be deceived; for he will not judge anyone who has walked more or less than I to have walked. And what I have said about this one word applies to everything which I had agreed could be shown, apart from those two which we have excepted.

30. *Aug.*: I accept this; but doesn't speaking seem to you to be one thing, teaching another?

Adeo.: Certainly. For if they were the same no one would teach without speaking. But since we teach many things by signs other than words, who could doubt the difference?

Aug.: Are teaching and signifying different or are they not?

Adeo.: I think they're the same.

Aug.: Surely he speaks rightly who says that we signify so as to teach?

Adeo.: Absolutely.

Aug.: What if someone were to say that we teach so as to signify, he can be easily refuted by the previous statement, can't he?

Adeo.: That's right.

Aug.: Therefore, if we signify so as to teach but do not teach so as to signify, teaching is one thing, signifying another.

Adeo.: You're right, and I was wrong to reply that both were the same.

Aug.: Now answer whether he who teaches what teaching is does so by signifying or otherwise?

Adeo.: I don't see how he can do it otherwise.

Aug.: So you were wrong just recently in saying that a thing can be taught without signs; since, when it is asked what teaching is, we see that not even this can be done without giving signs, as you've granted that signifying is one thing and teaching another. For if they are different, as it appears, and teaching can't be demonstrated except through giving signs, it certainly can't be demonstrated through itself, as seemed so to you. So, as yet, nothing has been found which can be shown through itself except speech, which also signifies itself among other things. Yet since it is itself a sign also, it is not yet entirely clear what can apparently be taught without signs.

Adeo.: I have no reason not to agree.

31. *Aug.*: Therefore it is agreed that nothing can be taught without signs and that knowledge itself should be dearer to us than the signs by which we gain knowledge, although not everything which is signified can be superior to its own signs.

Adeo.: So it seems.

Aug.: Can you remember the long circuitous route by which we achieved so small a result? For since we began our verbal wrangling, which we have done for so long, it has been a toil to discover these three points: whether nothing can be taught without signs; whether certain signs should be preferred to the things which they signify; and whether the understanding of things itself is better than their signs. But there is a fourth point, which I would like briefly to ascertain from you: whether you think that our findings are such that you cannot now have doubts about them.

Adeo.: I'd wish that through such circumlocutions and intricacies we had arrived at certainty. But your question somehow worries me and deters me from agreeing. For I think you would not have asked this of me unless you had some contradiction to make; and the very complexity of the issues disallows me from wholly examining them and from safely responding. I fear that in such envelopments there is something hidden which the keenness of my mind might not reveal.

Aug.: I willingly accept your hesitation; for it signifies an in no way imprudent mind, which is the greatest guardian of serenity. It is extremely difficult not to be perturbed, when those things which we held with easy and ready approval are shaken by opposing arguments and are, as it were, torn from our grasp. Therefore, as it is reasonable to yield to arguments well considered and proven, so it is perilous to hold the unknown as known. For, since those things are often undermined which we most steadfastly presume will remain firm and established, there is the fear that we fall into such hatred or fear of reason that it might not seem worthy to have trust even in evident truth.

32. But come, let us more freely reconsider whether you rightly thought that those things should be doubted. For I ask you, if someone ignorant of how to deceive birds,

which are captured with canes and birdlime, were to meet a bird-catcher who was equipped with his tools but was not actually hunting, but was rather making a journey. And on seeing the bird-catcher he were to hurry up and, as happens, in wondering to himself were to reflect and ask himself what the man's equipment were to mean; yet, when the bird-catcher saw the other paying attention to him, in an eagerness to show off, were to disengage his canes and seeing some small bird nearby were to intercept, overcome, and capture it with his reeds and hawk. Surely, he would teach the spectator without any signification but by means of the thing which he desired to know?

Adeo.: I fear that what is here is such as I said concerning that man who asks what walking is; for I don't see that even here the whole of bird catching has been shown.

Aug.: It's easy to free you from this concern. For I add that we suppose him intelligent enough to learn the complete character of the art from what he has seen; it is enough to make the point that some people are able to be taught some things without signs, even if not all things.

Adeo.: To that I can add this also: if he were intelligent enough he would learn all that walking is when it is demonstrated by a few steps.

Aug.: It's acceptable to me that you do so and I not only have no objection but favour this. You see it has been shown by both of us that some people can be taught certain things without signs and that is false which a short time ago seemed correct to us, namely, that nothing can be shown without signs. For now from these examples there occur to me not one thing or another, but thousands of things which are demonstrated through themselves without any sign. Why, I ask you, should we doubt this?

Omitting the innumerable spectacles which men directly exhibit in all the theatres without signs, does not God and nature exhibit and show, through themselves, to

those beholding them, the sun itself and the light which pours forth and clothes all these things, also the moon and other stars, the land and the seas, and all the things which are innumerably begotten in them?

(9) Things and Signs.

33. What then if we consider this more carefully, perhaps you will find nothing which can be learned through its own signs. For when a sign is given to me, if it should find me ignorant of the thing whose sign it is, it can teach me nothing, but if it find me in a position of knowledge, what am I to learn through the sign? When I read, ‘Their *sarabarae* were not changed’⁵⁰⁵, the word ‘*sarabarae*’ does not show me the thing which is signified. If certain coverings for the head are called by this name, surely on hearing this I have not learned either what a head is or what coverings are? I knew these things before and knowledge of them did not come to me when they were named by others, but when I saw them. For when first those two syllables, when we say ‘head’ (*caput*), struck my ears, I was as ignorant of what they signified as when first I heard or read ‘*sarabarae*’. But when ‘head’ was often repeated I discovered, through noting and marking when it was said, that it was the designation for a thing which was already well known to me by sight. Before I discovered this, the word was only a sound to me; but I learned that it was a sign when I discovered of what thing it was the sign, which indeed, as I have said, I had learned not by signification but by seeing it. So the sign is learned more through the perception of the thing than the thing is learned through the giving of the sign.

⁵⁰⁵ Dan. 3:27.

34. That you may understand more clearly, imagine that we now hear 'head' being spoken for the first time, and in ignorance as to whether it is only a vocal sound or whether it also signifies something, ask what 'head' is - remember that we wish to have knowledge not of the thing which is signified, but of the sign itself which we clearly lack as long as we are ignorant of that which it is the sign of. So, if enquiring in this way, the thing itself is pointed out to us, it is by seeing it that we learn the sign which we had only heard, but had not yet known. Yet since there are two elements in this sign, namely, sound and signification, we certainly do not perceive the sound by means of the sign but through the ear being struck by the sound; but we perceive the signification by seeing the thing which is signified. For that pointing of the finger can signify nothing other than that to which it is pointed; it is not, however, pointed towards the sign but to the member which is called the head. Therefore, by that pointing I am not able to know the thing which I had already known, nor the sign towards which the finger is not pointed. But I am not overly concerned with the pointing of the finger, because it seems to me a sign of the indication rather than of the other things which are being shown, just like the adverb which we call 'look!' (*ecce*). Indeed, we are accustomed to point even with this adverb, in case one sign of indication should not be enough. I am above all striving to convince you, if I can, that we learn nothing through those signs which are called words. As I have said, we learn the force of a word, that is its signification which is hidden in the sound, by comprehending the thing itself which is signified, rather than perceive the reality by means of such signification.

35. And as I have said about 'head', I might also say concerning 'coverings' and countless other things; yet although I now know about these, I still don't yet know about those *sarabarae*. If someone were to signify them to me by means of gestures,

or were to paint them, or show me something which they are like, that I may not say that he does not teach me (which I could easily prove, if I wanted to speak slightly longer); but what is to the point is that he would not be teaching me with words. And if, seeing them by chance when I was present, he should catch my attention and say: 'Look, there are *sarabarae*'; I should learn what I did not know, not through the words which were spoken, but by seeing it, and through this act of seeing it occurred that I grasped and understood what that name meant. For when I learned of the thing itself, I did not trust another's words but my own eyes; yet perhaps I did believe those words so that I might direct my attention, that is to say, so that I might seek by looking at what I would see.

36. As far as I can grant it, words are important in that they only urge us to seek things, but do not show them to us that we may know them. However, he teaches me something who shows those things, which I wish to know, to my eyes, to any other bodily sense, or indeed to my mind itself. Therefore, by words we learn nothing except words, in fact only the sound and murmur of words; for if those things which are not signs cannot be words, although I have already heard a word, I do not know that it is a word until I know what it signifies. It follows that when things are understood, the understanding of words is also achieved; indeed, when words are heard, not even the words are learned. Those words which we know, we do not learn, and those which we do not know, we cannot grant ourselves to have learned except by grasping the signification of them; and this happens not by the hearing of vocal emissions, but by the understanding of the things signified. For certain it is the truest reasoning and is truthfully said that when words are uttered either we know what they signify or we do not; if we do, we are reminded rather than taught, and if we do not, we are not even reminded, but are perhaps being urged to enquire.

(10) Knowledge.

37. But if you were to say that we could not recognise, unless we saw them, those coverings for heads whose name we possess only as a sound and that we cannot fully know the name unless we recognise the things; yet we do nevertheless accept that story concerning the boys⁵⁰⁶, how they overcame the king and the flames through their faith and piety, what praise they sang to God, what honour they received even from their very enemy himself. Surely we have not learned of these things other than through words? I'll reply that everything which is signified by these words were already within our knowing. For what 'three boys' are, what 'a furnace', what 'fire', what 'a king', and finally, what 'unharmd by fire', and all the other things which these words signify, I already knew. But Ananias, Azarias, and Misael are as unknown to me as those *sarabarae*, nor have these names helped me at all to know them, nor are they able to help me now. Yet all of these things, which are read of in that account happened at that time just as is written; this I confess myself to believe rather than to know. And those same people whom we believe were not ignorant of that difference; for the Prophet says, 'Unless you believe, you will not understand'⁵⁰⁷. He would surely not have said this, if he did not judge that there was a difference. Therefore, what I understand, I also believe; but not everything which I believe, do I also understand. Yet everything which I understand, I know; but I do not know everything which I believe. But I am not therefore unaware how useful it is to believe also many things which I do not know; and to this usefulness I ascribe also the account of the three boys. Therefore, although most things I cannot know, yet I know how useful it is to believe them.

⁵⁰⁶ Dan. 3.

38. Concerning, however, all those things which we understand, we do not consult a speaker who sounds from without, but rather we consult the Truth which presides over the very mind within, though perhaps urged by words to take consultation. He who is consulted does teach; He who is said to dwell in the inner man is Christ; that is, the unchangeable Power and eternal Wisdom of God. The Wisdom which every rational soul consults, but to each only so much is disclosed as they are able to take due to their own good or evil will. And if ever one is deceived, it does not occur through some fault in the consulted Truth, just as it is not a fault of the light, which is outside, that our corporeal eyes are often deceived; and this light we admit ourselves to consult as regards visible things that it may reveal them to us, as far as we are able to see them.

39. If we consult light with regard to colours, and regarding the other things which we perceive through the body, we consult the elements of this world and the same bodies which we perceive, and the senses themselves which the mind uses, as it were, as interpreters for knowing such things; and, further, regarding those things which are intelligible, we consult the inner truth through reasoning; what can be said, from where is the clarity that we learn something through words other than the sound itself which strikes our ears? For everything we perceive, we perceive by bodily sense or by the mind. The former we call sensible, the latter intelligible or, that I may speak in the manner of our own authors, we call the former carnal, the latter spiritual. When we are asked about the former, we reply, if the things which we perceive through the senses are present, just as when we are looking at a new moon it is asked of us of what sort or where it is. In this case, if he who does the asking does not see the object, he believes the words and often does not believe them; however he in no way learns

⁵⁰⁷ Isa. 7:9.

unless he himself sees what is being spoken of, where he now learns not by words, but by the things themselves and by his senses. For the words have the same sound for one who sees as for one who does not see. But when there is enquiry not about those things which we perceive in person, but about those which we formerly perceived, we now talk not of the things themselves but of the images impressed by them and committed to the memory. How we can at all talk of these as being true when we can see that they are false, I shall ignore; unless it is because we say that we do not see and perceive them, but that we *have* seen them and *have* perceived them. Thus we bear these images in the recesses of our memory as some sort of proof of things previously perceived, which we contemplate in the mind and can speak of with clear conscience that we do not lie. But these are proofs for us; for if one who hears this has perceived these things and paid attention, he does not learn by my words but himself recalls the images set away within himself. Yet, if he does not perceive them, who does not understand that he believes my words rather than learns by them?

40. But when it concerns those things which we perceive in the mind, that is by the intellect and reason, we speak of those things which we contemplate instantly in that inner light of truth, through which he who is called the inner man gains enlightenment and pleasure. Then he who hears me, if he also sees those things with a private and sincere eye, knows what I speak of through his own contemplation, not through my words. Therefore, I don't even teach this man even though I speak the truth and he sees the truth; for he is taught not by my words, but by the things themselves manifested by God revealing them inwardly. So, when asked about these things, he could reply. What could be more absurd than to think that he is taught through my speech, who, before I spoke, could explain these very things if asked? For as often happens, when one is asked he denies something and when asked further

questions is compelled to admit it; this occurs due to the weakness of his vision, as he is unable to consult that light with regard to the whole matter, which he is urged to deal with by parts, when he is asked about these parts on which the whole depends, which he was unable to discern in its totality. If in this situation he is persuaded by the words of the man who questions him, yet he is not taught by the words, but they put him to enquiry in such a way as that man by whom it is sought is able to learn inwardly. Just as if I were to ask you concerning this very subject which is being discussed whether nothing can be taught through words, and at first it would seem absurd to you, being unable to see it in its entirety; so it would be necessary to question you so that your strength could direct itself for hearing that inward Teacher. So I should say, 'Where did you learn those things which, when I was talking, you admitted to be true, and are certain and confirm that you know them?' You would perhaps reply that I taught you. Then I would add, 'What if I were to say that I had seen a man flying; would my words give so much certainty to you, just as if you were to hear that wise men are better than fools?' You would surely deny it and reply that you did not believe it or, even if you believed, that you did not know it; yet that you certainly knew the latter statement. From this you would certainly understand that you had not learned anything from my words, either in the case where you did not know what I affirmed, nor in that where you knew very well, since, when asked about each of them, you would swear that you were ignorant of the former and that you knew the latter. Then indeed you will admit that whole proposal, which you had denied, when you have understood clearly and certainly those things from which it is ascertained; namely, that regarding all the things which we say the hearer either does not know whether they are true, or knows they are false, or knows they are true. In the first of these three options he either believes, supposes, or doubts; in the second he opposes

and denies; in the third he attests to its truth. Therefore, in none of them does he learn, because he who does not know the thing after our words, he who knows that he has heard what is false, and he who could, when asked, have answered with the same words which had been spoken, prove that nothing had been taught through the words.

(11) Speakers' Words and Speakers' Minds.

41. For this reason, in those things also which are perceived in the mind, whoever cannot discern them listens in vain to the words of him who can, except that it is useful to believe such things as long as one is ignorant of them. Yet, whoever is able to discern them is inwardly a disciple of the truth and outwardly a judge of the speaker, or rather of the words themselves; for, generally, he knows those things which are said, even when the speaker himself is ignorant. Just as if someone, who believes in the Epicureans and thinks that the soul is mortal, sets forth the arguments which are propounded by wiser men concerning its immortality, for a listener who can perceive spiritual things, and judges him to speak truly. And the man who is speaking, is ignorant as to whether he is speaking the truth; indeed he even esteems them utterly false. So, surely one cannot think that he teaches those things which he does not know? Yet he uses the same words which one with knowledge could also use.

42. Therefore it is not even left to words that at least the mind of the speaker is revealed by them if it is indeed uncertain whether he knows those things which he is saying. Add also the liars and deceivers, through whom you can easily understand that the mind is not only unrevealed, but is even concealed by them. In no way do I doubt that the words of truthful people try, and make some claim to reveal the mind of the speaker which they would bring about, with the acceptance of all, if liars were not

allowed to speak. And yet we have often experienced both in ourselves and in others that words are uttered not of those things which are thought about; which I see can happen in two ways: either when a speech is committed to memory and when often spoken comes out of the mouth of one thinking of other things, which often happens to us when singing a hymn; or when some words rush out in the place of others, against our will and by a slip of the tongue. Here also the signs of those things which we have in mind are not heard. In fact, liars also think about those things which they are saying, so that even if we don't know whether they are speaking the truth, we do nevertheless know that they do have in mind what they are saying, provided one of those two things which I mentioned does not happen to them. If anyone contends that these things both happen occasionally and are apparent when they do, though they are often hidden and have often escaped my notice when listening, nevertheless I make no objection.

43. But there occurs, in addition to these, another class which is certainly widely evident and is the seed of innumerable dissensions and disputes; when the speaker signifies what he is thinking of, but generally only to himself and to some others, but does not signify the same thing to him whom he addresses and to some other people. For someone may say, with us overhearing, that mankind is surpassed in virtue by certain beasts; we are immediately unable to accept this, and with great insistence refute this statement as absolutely false and pernicious. When he is perhaps calling bodily strength 'virtue' and expresses by this name what he is thinking of, and he neither lies, nor is in error with regard to those things, nor does he use words committed to memory, while thinking of something else. Neither does he, by a slip of the tongue, utter something other than he intended, but merely calls that which he is thinking of by another name than we do; and concerning that thing we should

immediately agree with him, if we were able to see his thought which he has been unable to reveal to us through the words he used and in expressing his opinion. They say that definitions can remedy this sort of mistake, so that in this case, if he were to define what 'virtue' is, he would make clear, they say, that the dispute concerns the word not the thing. I would grant that this is so, but how many can be found who are good at definitions? Yet there have been many disputes over the discipline of giving definitions, which are unsuitable to consider at this point, and I don't entirely approve of them.

44. I omit the fact that there are many things which we do not hear well and argue much and long about what we have heard, just as recently with regard to a certain Punic word when I had said it meant 'compassion', you said that you had heard that it meant 'devotion' from those to whom this language is well known. However, I resisted this and asserted that you had forgotten what you had been told; for you seemed to me not to have said 'devotion' but 'faith' even though you were sitting very close to me and in no way do these two names deceive the ear through a similarity in sound. Yet, for a long time I thought that you did not know what had been said to you, since I did not know what you had said. For if I had heard you correctly, it would have in no way seemed absurd to me that 'devotion' and 'compassion' were called by one Punic word. These are frequent occurrences. But, as I have said, let us omit them, in case I seem to raise a malicious charge against words due to the negligence of the listener or even due to human deafness. Those things are more troublesome which I have listed above, where we are unable to understand the thoughts of speakers when the words are most distinctly heard and are in Latin, and when we speak the same language.

(12) The Teacher.

45. Yet I now agree and concede that when words have been heard by one to whom they are known, he can know that the speaker was thinking about those things which they signify. But does he in this way also learn whether those things are true, as is now our enquiry?

Surely teachers don't claim that their thoughts and not the disciplines which they think they pass on by speaking are perceived and grasped? For who is so ridiculously curious that he sends his child to school so as to learn what the teacher is thinking? But when they have explained by means of words all those disciplines, which they profess themselves to teach, even those of virtue and wisdom; then those who are called pupils consider to themselves whether what has been said is true, that is, by looking to that inner truth according to their ability. It is then that they learn, and when they have found within that the truth has been spoken they give praise not knowing that they don't praise the teachers but rather those who have been taught, if they indeed know what it is that they have said. Yet people are mistaken, as they call teachers those who are not, because for the most part there is no delay imposed between the time of speaking and the time of understanding; and because, after the speakers remind them, they swiftly learn inwardly, and think that they have learned externally from the one who reminds them.

46. If God be willing, we shall, at another time, look into the complete utility of words and if properly considered this is no small task. For the present, I have reminded you not to grant more to words than is fitting; so that we should now not only believe, but also begin to understand how truly it has been written with divine authority that we should call no one on earth our teacher because the one teacher of all

presides in heaven. What 'in heaven' means, He will teach us, by whom we are reminded through men by outward signs, so that we are taught to turn inwardly to Him; to love and to know whom is the blessed life which all claim to seek, yet there are few who may rejoice that they have truly found it. But now I want you to tell me what you think about this entire discourse of mine. For if you know that what has been said is true, and if asked about each point, you would have said that you knew them. Therefore, you see from whom you have learned these things; for it is not from me, to whom you would have given all the answers if I asked. Yet if you do not know that they are true, neither I nor He has taught you; not I because I am in no way able to teach, not He because you are still unable to learn.

Adeo.: Truly I have learned, through your words reminding me that nothing else occurs through words than man is reminded to learn, and that what the considerable thought of a speaker reveals through his speech is very little. Moreover whether the truth is spoken He alone who dwells within can teach; He whom I shall with his help love the more ardently as I advance in learning. However, I am extremely grateful for this discourse of yours, which you performed without interruption, for it has anticipated and refuted every objection which I was ready to make. You passed over nothing at all which was causing me doubt, and nothing concerning which that secret oracle might not have responded to me in such a way as was claimed by your words.

Appendix 2: Textual Notes

For the *de magistro* the text standardly followed is the *CCL* (29) edition by K. Daur. The editions by G. Weigel (*CSEL* 77), G. Madec (*BA*, Paris 1976, repr. 1999), and G. Wijdeveld (*Aurelius Augustinus De magistro*, Amsterdam 1937) have also been consulted. The following translations have been consulted: G.G. Leckie (1938), J.M. Colleran (1950), J.H.S. Burleigh (1953), G. Madec (1976), A. Pieretti (1990) and P. King (1995)⁵⁰⁸. All translations given are my own unless otherwise stated. Extensive use has also been made of the electronic resource *CAG* edited by C. Mayer. All citations are drawn from the *CAG* resource which uses the *CCL* (29) edition. There is one different reading from the Daur text⁵⁰⁹:

29.8 *discedere* for *discere*

This reading, following Weigel, occurs in codex *B* and in the consensus codicum ξ (MLN), υ (PQ), and θ (AG).

<i>B</i>	=	fragmentum Bernense AA 90, 18 s. IX
<i>M</i>	=	codex Monacensis Latinus 18540 ^b s. X
<i>L</i>	=	codex Londinensis 10, 940 s. XI
<i>N</i>	=	codex Vindobonensis 766, 6 s. XII
<i>P</i>	=	codex Parisinus Latinus 2974 s. XI
<i>Q</i>	=	codex Monacensis Latinus 14330 s. XI
<i>A</i>	=	codex Andegavensis 286 s. XII
<i>G</i>	=	codex Gratianopolitanus 204 s. XII

The reading in *discere* occurs in codices *R*, *V*, and in the consensus codicum φ (*ST*) and *m* (*Patrologia Latina*).

<i>R</i>	=	codex Ramensis 392 s. IX
<i>V</i>	=	codex Vaticanus Latinus 515 s. IX
<i>S</i>	=	codex Sangallensis 140 s. X
<i>T</i>	=	codex Londinensis 8. C III Royal, s. X

⁵⁰⁸ For a fuller listing of translations available cf. Pieretti (1990), 60-61.

⁵⁰⁹ In the following citation the chapter number, as standardly used throughout this thesis, is followed by the line number as it occurs in the Daur edition.

Augustine's Works: abbreviations, titles, editions.

The following list includes the works of Augustine cited in this thesis. All citations in this thesis are taken from those editions of Augustine's works used in the CAG electronic resource.

<i>Acad.</i>	<i>contra Academicos</i>	PL 32; CSEL 63; CCL 29
<i>an. quant.</i>	<i>de quantitate animae</i>	PL 32; CSEL 89
<i>beata v.</i>	<i>de beata vita</i>	PL 32; CCL 29
<i>civ.</i>	<i>de civitate dei</i>	PL 41; CSEL 40; CCL 47-48
<i>conf.</i>	<i>confessiones</i>	PL 32; CSEL 33; CCL 27; ed. M. Skutella
<i>cura mort.</i>	<i>de cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum</i>	PL 40; CSEL 41
<i>dial./DD</i>	<i>de dialectica</i>	PL 32; ed. J. Pinborg
<i>div. qu.</i>	<i>de diversis quaestionibus</i>	PL 40; CCL 44A
<i>doctr. chr./DDC</i>	<i>de doctrina christiana</i>	PL 34; CSEL 80; CCL 32
<i>en. Ps.</i>	<i>enarrationes in Psalmos</i>	PL 36-37; CCL 38-40
<i>ench.</i>	<i>enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide et spe et caritate</i>	PL 40; CCL 46
<i>ep.</i>	<i>epistulae</i>	PL 33; CSEL 34, 44, 57, 88
<i>Gn. litt.</i>	<i>de Genesi ad litteram</i>	PL 34; CSEL 28.1
<i>gramm.</i>	<i>ars sancti Augustini pro fratrum mediocritate breviata</i> , ed. Weber	
<i>Io. ev. tr.</i>	<i>in Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV</i>	PL 35; CCL 36
<i>lib. arb.</i>	<i>de libero arbitrio</i>	PL 32; CSEL 74; CCL 29
<i>DM</i>	<i>de magistro</i>	PL 32; CSEL 77; CCL 29
<i>mend.</i>	<i>de mendacio</i>	PL 40; CSEL 41
<i>mor.</i>	<i>de moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum</i>	PL 32
<i>mus.</i>	<i>de musica</i>	PL 32
<i>ord.</i>	<i>de ordine</i>	PL 32; CSEL 63; CCL 29
<i>retr.</i>	<i>retractationes</i>	PL 32; CSEL 36; CCL 57
<i>s.</i>	<i>sermones</i>	PL 38-39; CCL 41; SMP 1 RB 51 (1939)

<i>s. dom. m.</i>	<i>de sermone domini</i>	
	<i>in monte</i>	<i>PL 34; CCL 35</i>
<i>sol.</i>	<i>soliloquia</i>	<i>PL 32; CSEL 89</i>
<i>trin.</i>	<i>de trinitate</i>	<i>PL 42; CCL 50-50A</i>
<i>util. cred.</i>	<i>de utilitate credendi</i>	<i>CSEL 25.1</i>
<i>vera rel.</i>	<i>de vera religione</i>	<i>PL 34; CSEL 77; CCL 32</i>

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Auct. ad Her.

ad Her. 1.3: **43 n.38 (0082)**; 2.16: **215 n.340 (0463)**.

Alexander Aphrodisias

in Ar. Top. 301.19-25: **47 n.48 (0090)**.

[Ammonius]

in APr., SVF 2.236: **150 (0330)**.

Ammonius

in Cat. 6.9 ff.: **123 (0258)**;

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24.7-9: **132 (0283)**.

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nu. 658: **51 n.59 (0101)**.

Aristotle

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APr. 2.27: **59 n.84 (0118)**; 2.27.70a3 ff.: **59 (0117)**;

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